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# THE MUSIC REVIEW

Edited by GEOFFREY SHARP

VOL. X, NO. 2

MAY, 1949

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## *Aesthetic—and Consecutive Fifths*

BY

MATTHEW SHIRLAW

To the ancient riddle—why are consecutive octaves and fifths unpleasant?—modern artistic progress and freedom, real or so-called, would appear to have furnished an effective answer. They do not sound unpleasant. On the contrary, they are frequently strikingly effective, even charming. The attempt to discover why they were ever prohibited can now serve no practical purpose. The solution of a problem which has ceased to exist need not concern us. There is no problem to solve. The modern composer considers himself at liberty to write octaves and fifths where and when he pleases. Any charge that he has transgressed "the rules" would merely amuse him, much as Hans Sachs was amused with the pedantic puerilities of Beckmesser. Of modern practice in this respect no one is better aware than the young student-composer. Nevertheless, he is not thereby relieved of considerable perplexity and confusion of mind. He is wise enough to appreciate the benefit to be derived from a thorough training in harmony and counterpoint. If, however, he applies himself to any recent, or not so recent work on the subject, or enters any of our universities, colleges, or academies of music, he is soon made aware that the ancient canon—"thou shalt not write consecutive fifths"—is as strictly enforced as it was 200 years ago, and must be as strictly obeyed.

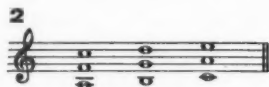
Quite naturally, he feels himself aggrieved. Why should he be thus "cribbed, cabined, and confined"? Why should he be obliged to conform to a hoary tradition that is disregarded by the modern composer? It sometimes happens that after his morning studies, during which any consecutives he may have perpetrated have been mercilessly blue-pencilled, he has the privilege of listening to some work by his teacher, who may be an able composer. One readily pardons him if he delightedly, if somewhat cynically, hails the "prohibited consecutives" that are almost sure to be found in a work in the modern style. Should he expostulate, he will very probably be told that when he sets out on his own career as a composer he will be free to do what his teacher does. Not very satisfactory or enlightening from the student's point of view! What he wants to know is why, if his teacher's fifths are right, his own are wrong. He is unable to find, and is unlikely to find any satisfactory explanation as to why the consecutives in question are unpleasant.

The apparently absurd topsy-turvydom does not stop here. An examination of all the facts exposes a serious, and somewhat extraordinary aesthetical problem. We know that the closing years of the ninth century witnessed the rise of one of the most important developments in musical history, *viz.* the beginnings of harmonic music. In the organum, which consisted entirely of consecutive fourths, fifths and octaves added to a plainsong melody, *e.g.*

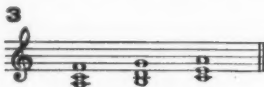


harmony made its debut in what might be described as a rude or rudimentary fashion, were it not that the methods of the organum have attained a remarkable resurgence in the works of twentieth-century composers. After more than a thousand years of harmonic development, it does not seem possible to characterize the successions of parallel fourths and fifths presented to us by R. Strauss, Debussy, Ravel and others as rudimentary harmony. We also know that one of the earliest writers on the organum, the monk Hucbald (*circa* 900 A.D.), definitely assures us that these—later prohibited—consecutives sound “sweet and pleasant to the ear”. In succeeding centuries they became decidedly unpleasant and offensive. In our own day they have again become “sweet and pleasant”. This latter is an understatement which takes no account of what really amounts to a new aesthetic development, *viz.* that in our own day parallel fifths are both pleasant and unpleasant.

Various reasons have been advanced for the bad effect of such consecutives. It has been said that consecutive octaves are objectionable because in music in parts which are clearly defined the balance is disturbed. When two voices suddenly, without any apparent reason, sing the same notes, the harmony is weakened by the loss of a part, while the succession of notes they sing is brought into undue prominence. As for fifths, these are objectionable because the parts move simultaneously in two different keys, *e.g.*



This is not convincing, one reason being that in the following:—



the same parts are heard simultaneously, and unaltered, except that one is placed an octave lower. Yet the effect is excellent. Also, why the necessity to explain fifths in a way totally different from octaves? Is it not more probable that the root cause is the same for both? Both form part of the resonance of musical sound. The octave is the first harmonic or overtone in such resonance: the fifth, or twelfth is the second. Another reason alleged in the case of fifths is lack of harmonic connection, faulty succession of disconnected triads. The harmonic successions in Ex. 4, however, are not faulty. Yet they are the same as in Ex. 2.



Still another view is that "no two voices can double each other for two consecutive octaves or fifths without dissolving their integrity in a false resonance"—an obscure statement that is perhaps not altogether clear to those who make it. Obscurity is often mistaken for profundity. One can understand the upper sound of an octave or fifth dissolving its integrity in the lower sound, of which it is an overtone, thus reinforcing the lower sound, but not *both* lower and upper sounds. What is a "false resonance"? And how can any sound dissolve its integrity in a false resonance, or in any resonance that is not real and actual?

In the opinion of many it is sheer waste of time to look for a solution of the problem in this direction. Music has nothing to do with the intellect (one forbears to substitute "some intellects"), and still less with natural and acoustical law. Its basis is aesthetic: its roots are in feeling or emotion. In his *Sensations of Tone* Helmholtz remarks that music is "largely the result of aesthetical principles which have already changed, and will still further change with the progressive development of humanity". This does not seem to admit of argument. Only it does not explain why aesthetical principles, as such, should be true for one generation and false for the next. The dictionary definition of the term *principle* is:—a fundamental truth on which others are founded, or from which they spring. Does fundamental truth change? If so, can it be either fundamental or true? Keats proclaimed that "a thing of beauty is a joy for ever". Ought this to read:—"a thing of beauty is a joy for a short time or until it is perceived to be tiresome and objectionable"? Tolstoi (*What is Art*), with his wonted earnestness, sought diligently for aesthetical principles in numerous writings treating of the beautiful, but failed to find them.

The famous Kant was of opinion that the "search for aesthetical principles is merely fruitless trouble". Beauty in art is the product of genius. "Genius is a talent for producing that for which no definite concept can be given: it is not a mere aptitude for what can be learned by a rule." (*Kritik of Judgment*, Pt. I.) And again:—

"There can be no objective rule of taste which shall determine by means of concepts what is beautiful, for every judgment as to the beautiful is aesthetical, *i.e.* the feeling of the Subject, and not a concept of the Object, is its determining ground. To seek for a principle of taste which shall furnish, by means of definite concepts, a universal criterion of the Beautiful is fruitless trouble, because what is sought is impossible and self-contradictory." (*Ibid.*, Pt. I.)

The aesthetical explanation of "prohibited consecutives" appears to elude us.

If it be fruitless trouble to search for aesthetical principles, we may at least fall back on the manifest truth that we listen to music because we like it. We know what gives us pleasure, as well as what displeases us. Why dispute over what is after all merely a matter of taste, of subjective or individual feeling or emotion? What is acceptable to one individual may be decidedly disagreeable to another. Similarly, may not that which is pleasant to one generation fall into disfavour with the next? What we name the Beautiful and the Sublime would appear to be dependent on individual taste or passing

fashion. It was not thus, however, that Beethoven thought of the beautiful in music when he described it as "a higher revelation than wisdom or philosophy", nor Wagner when he called it "the most superhuman of all the arts, divine music, this second revelation of the world, the unspeakable sounding secret of existence". Evidently neither of these great men considered music to be merely a titillation of the senses. Were it really such the earnest musician, who reveres his art, would probably consider himself unjustified in being any longer mixed up with such an aesthetic camouflage, and might well scan the *Situations Vacant* column of the morning newspaper in order to discover his chances of earning an honest living.

Let us revert to Hucbald, that ancient modernist who indulged in parallel fifths and octaves as freely as any composer of the twentieth century. The epoch of the organum, which itself marked one of the most important stages in musical development, *viz.* the beginnings of harmonic music, was succeeded by another, representing a revolution, or evolution, so momentous as to be unsurpassed in the entire course of musical history—the rise of polyphony. While the most essential feature of the organum is its uniformity, the submergence of its parts in a harmonic resonance, the essence of polyphony on the other hand, is the diversity, even the mutual opposition of the individual elements of which it consists. The difference is not unlike that between an autocracy and a democracy. Each has its dangers and its defects: the former, in blasphemous pretensions to a theocracy; the latter, in an excessive individualism which pursues its way regardless of its neighbours, and injures itself in the refusal to surrender what it considers to be its rights in the interests and for the wellbeing of the whole community. Thus the one passes readily into the other, and they cannot always be clearly distinguished. Thus also in music. The problem of polyphony is to bring together its diverse elements, its manifold individual life, into an artistic unity, a harmonious whole. The richness, the grandeur of a true polyphony are known to every music lover. The polyphonic masterpieces of a Palestrina, of a Bach, are among the chief glories of musical art.

The decay of the organum and the rise of polyphony was brought about by the organum itself. Itself contained the seeds of its decay. To mediaeval musicians the presence in the modes of the tritone, F—B was a source of considerable annoyance and vexation of spirit. They went the length of describing it as *diabolus in musica*, as representing the all too successful efforts of the evil one to introduce trouble into the fair artistic Eden. A means—a peculiar one—of avoiding the occurrence of the tritone in the organum was therefore sought and found:—



Here the lowest part, whose normal range is a fourth below the plainsong, does not descend below G, for its descent to F would cause the appearance of the tritone F—B. As, however, the discord G—A could not form a suitable close,

it was directed that G should proceed upwards to A, thus closing in the unison. The device signalled a momentous event. Not only are contrary and oblique motion revealed, but the fundamental principle of polyphony itself, *viz.* the independence and individuality of the parts. Of the full significance and import of all this, musicians of the period could not have been aware. They had been led to it almost against their will, almost compelled to adopt it in order to avoid the tritone. The *diabolus in musica* had brought about one of the greatest developments in musical history. As if the father of evil, instead of succeeding in his attempts to ruin the divine art, had bestowed on it one of its richest treasures. And now, and for a considerable time, contrary motion prevailed, to the entire exclusion of similar, the reason being that contrary motion defined most clearly and firmly the independence of the individual parts. Composers, however, were unable to rid themselves quite so easily of the influence and methods of the organum, and with the return of similar and oblique motion—for these could not long be dispensed with—occasional parallel fifths and octaves were still made use of. As they gained greater mastery, and as the new style, in the course of centuries, attained to ever greater perfection, such consecutives became definitely offensive to the ear. The cause of their bad effect, then, appears to have some connection with the nature of polyphony itself. Such a view would be confirmed, almost to a certainty, should we meet with a type of music which has come into existence within recent years, not based on polyphonic principles, and in which the "prohibited consecutives" again make their appearance. And we do find this in music of our own day.



But even Chopin does not scruple to write:



In none of these excerpts do the fifths produce a bad effect.

The rise of the Opera about the year 1600 A.D. initiated a new epoch, although it did not mark, as is sometimes thought, the close of the age of polyphony. It marked the beginning of the new style of accompanied monody, and a notable and ever increasing development of harmony, and its allied key-systems. Polyphonic principles have, nevertheless, retained their vitality. Their decay is not even in sight. The past 350 years have witnessed a curious

ebb and flow as respects contrapuntal or polyphonic and harmonic principles. Now one has prevailed and now the other. One of the most outstanding features of the art of music since the time of Wagner and Chopin—to go no further back—is its notable harmonic development. The twentieth century, with its “tonal chords”, “whole-tone scale”, quarter-tones, and all kinds of new discords, has evolved what appears almost to be a new art of harmony, to some a byword, to others a test of musical intelligence, and a vast enrichment of the means of musical expression. The harmonic tissue is all important. Its nature may be understood from a single chord, the augmented sixth, as F-A-C-D#, and its resolution E-G#-B-E, in which the parallel fifths do not fail to appear.

The treatment of some of the newer discords at the hands of not a few modern composers, is almost that of Hucbald's organum, and furnishes a remarkable instance of history repeating itself. When Hucbald daringly ventured on the harmony of the fourth, he merely repeated it higher or lower on the notes of the modes traversed by the plainsong. When R. Strauss lights on the discord:—



he does much the same thing, simply carrying it down the chromatic scale. In this case, the fifths are more apparent to the eye than to the ear. If polyphonic principles do not obtain in the organum, neither do they obtain in much of our modern music. If “prohibited consecutives” are used in what is an essentially harmonic style, whether of a Hucbald, a Strauss, or a Debussy but avoided in the contrapuntal or polyphonic style of a Palestrina or a Bach, the conclusion to be drawn seems fairly obvious. The one style is sometimes said to have a vertical, the other a horizontal aspect. These terms are not wholly accurate, for all music unfolds itself in time, which would be indistinguishable without its moments, as space would be without its objects. Nevertheless, up to a point the distinction is real. In harmony or accompanied monody the ear is mainly concerned with the tonal aggregations, with the harmonic succession or progression from chord to chord: whereas in polyphony it is attentive to the sustained flow of the individual parts.

In the following example:—





the fifths may be said to pass unobserved. However, should the ear insist on distinguishing four individual parts, the fifths will appear objectionable. Frequently melody and harmony are so interwoven that they present a vertical and a horizontal aspect. Although a harmonized melody is not considered to be in the polyphonic style, it may nevertheless be possible to distinguish individual parts. In this excerpt, no one would venture to improve MacDowell's harmony:—



But should the ear be less attentive to the harmony than to the movement of the parts, it will prefer to dispense with the parallel fifths. The Karg-Elert quotation may be said to consist of three "parts". The fifths may sound objectionable, or they may not. In the latter case, the ear does not distinguish an independent middle part, but merely the completion of the harmony:—



the fifths above the bass form part of its resonance. The effect is good because, having dissolved their integrity in this resonance, they no longer rank as "prohibited consecutives". Did they actually impress the ear as an individual part or melody, as can hardly be avoided if they are placed in the highest part:—



*i.e.* did they refuse to become submerged in the resonance of the bass, a change is brought about that is much for the worse.

The major third also forms part of the resonance of musical sound. Ought not two successive major thirds to offend the ear as much as fifths? The major third, however, does not coalesce with the prime tone to the same degree as the octave or fifth. The octave arises directly as C-C': the fifth immediately thereafter as C-C'-G', but the major third in the series, C-C'-G'-C''-E''.

Two successive major thirds, as  $\begin{smallmatrix} A-B \\ F-G \end{smallmatrix}$ , were and are avoided in counterpoint because of the "false relation of the tritone". In the harmonic style they are freely used. With regard to the fourth, as C-F, the higher sound has no place among the harmonics or upper partials of the lower.

The question of consecutive fifths, then, is somehow related to part-writing, to the movement of individual voices. This does not explain their peculiar effect. We are now in a position, however, to penetrate to the heart of a problem that has intrigued musicians for generations. Let us look again on our two fifths:—



It has been, and is, generally supposed that the unpleasant effect of their succession arises from the fact that the upper part dissolves its integrity as such: that it becomes submerged in the resonance of the lower sounds. The real explanation may be stated in a sentence. The unpleasant effect of consecutive fifths arises from the fact that the upper sounds *do not* dissolve their integrity in the resonance of the lower: that they refuse to become submerged in such resonance. They stand rigidly apart, and obstinately maintain their individuality and independence.

Similarly with consecutive octaves. In the two sounds of the octave or fifth we may distinguish two tonal units, individual parts or voices. Or both sounds may coalesce in such a way as to produce the effect of a *clang*—to use a term introduced by Professor Tyndall—*i.e.* a compound musical sound. In the case of a solitary octave or fifth either aspect may be distinguished without contradiction. But in the case of a succession of two or more the fifth and octave sounds follow the course marked out by the resonance of the lower sounds of which they are the fifths and octaves. Although, however, in reality bound hand and foot in such resonance, they refuse to become absorbed in it, or surrender their individuality. Only by dissolving their integrity in the resonance in question is the unpleasant effect removed. They then no longer rank as "prohibited consecutives".

The history of parallel fifths then does not in reality furnish a secure basis for an aesthetic that would postulate the beautiful in music as little better than a subjective hypnosis, or a passing fashion with its roots in a mass psychology, a fashion favoured by one generation and discarded, even derided by the next. The aesthetical *miasma* has been largely dispelled, and we are able to breathe a purer air. Although it is true that the trivial, the frivolous, may exist in music as it may exist in man, the nobly beautiful in music was regarded by both Beethoven and Wagner as something which transcends man, something which is revealed to him. Both use the same term to describe it—it is a "revelation". To the musician are revealed the wonders of tone, as to the artist the wonders of light.



Notes from an analysis of  
*Mozart's Quartet in G major, K.387*

BY

I. M. BRUCE

*The Movements of K.387*

I

ALLEGRO VIVACE ASSAI, in G major SONATA FORM

THEME IA

Fig. IA 1.  
CRESC.

Fig. IA 1.  
CRESC.

THEME IIA

THEME IIB

THEME IIC

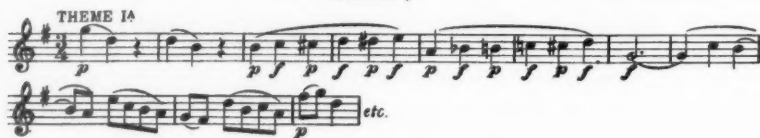
THEME S

FIG. X

## II

MENUETTO, ALLEGRO, in G major, alternating with TRIO in G minor

MENUETTO

ABA WITH INCOMPLETE FIRST SECTION (*i.e.* whose first section ends on the dominant)

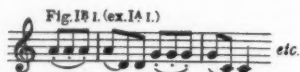
TRIO

ABA WITH INCOMPLETE FIRST SECTION

## III

ANDANTE CANTABILE, in C major

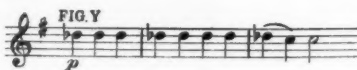
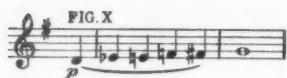
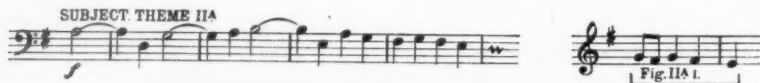
SONATA FORM WITHOUT DEVELOPMENT



## IV

MOLTO ALLEGRO, in G major

FUGUED SONATA FORM



*Order and Key-relationship of Movements*

K.387 belongs to the slightly smaller class of TCQ\* in which the first movement is immediately succeeded by the menuet and trio, and the slow movement immediately precedes the finale. This is evidently a variable matter, for which each listener will be able and will prefer to give his own reasons in each particular work.

But one point of much more interest and significance is the key-relationships between the four movements. In this matter K.387 must be considered typical of the large majority of TCQ, and indeed of Mozart's output as a whole. By far the commonest succession of keys between movements in a work in the major key is: first movement—tonic; menuet and trio—tonic and tonic minor respectively; slow movement—subdominant; and finale—tonic. The only variation of this scheme in the nine quartets of TCQ in major are that two slow movements are in the dominant key instead of in the subdominant; while some trios of menuets are in the dominant key, and one only in the subdominant. But all the menuets are in the tonic. In Mozart evidently we are not to expect any of those gorgeous bursts of key contrast *between* movements of which Haydn is so notably fond. But given that fact, the choice of subdominant is an obvious one for the more lyrical and contemplative character of the slow movement in the scheme. It destroys at the outset of the movement any expectation of continuing *action* and sounds the note of repose which is the distinguishing mark of Mozart's slow movements compared, say, with some of Beethoven's. It is worthy of note that the two slow movements of TCQ in the dominant major key, those of K.575 (the D major Quartet) and K.590 (the F major) give an impression of greater activity than the other seven slow movements.

*Forms of the Movements*

The forms which the movements take in K.387 are common enough in TCQ and in Mozart generally, though there are features which are not. The first movement of a large scale work is of course normally a sonata-form movement in a quick tempo. Rarely in Mozart and only once in TCQ is it preceded by an adagio introduction.

The menuet and trio are always in one or other of the four smaller melodic forms which Mozart knows; though the menuet of K.387 has some interesting features which require special consideration. Sonata-form without development was a favourite (though not, of course, the only) shape for the slow movement, and if we confine our attention to TCQ alone we shall find three other slow movements cast in this form, those of K.458 (B♭), K.465 (C major) and K.589 (B♭). The finales of TCQ are usually in sonata- or sonata-rondo-form; that of K.575 (D major) is in a special rondo-form invented by Mozart, and that of K.421 (D minor) is a set of variations.

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\* *The Ten Celebrated String Quartets* from which most of my comparisons are drawn.

### *The Smaller Melodic Forms*

The minuet of K.387 is an interesting case. For many years a wrangle has been going on as to which of the smaller melodic forms gave rise to sonata-form, Binary or Ternary. The partisans of Binary form claim that sonata-form originated in the melodic form whose first section ends with a close on the dominant; the partisans of Ternary form that it originated in the melodic form whose final section repeats its first. And as so often in such cases, both parties are in the right. Sonata-form originated in the melodic form whose first half ends on the dominant (or, at least, away from the tonic) and is repeated with necessary changes in its final section. The minuet of K.387 shows, as it were, the historical process at work. The embryo of sonata-form has developed a second subject in a contrasted key, but as yet has hardly organised a transition to it.

In fact, Mozart uses four kinds of shorter melodic form in the minuets, trios and other self-contained melodies of TCQ and elsewhere: binary or AB with first section incomplete (*i.e.* ending away from the tonic) and this is the binary of the textbooks; or (once only in TCQ) binary with first section complete (*i.e.* ending on the tonic); ternary or ABA with complete first section (this is the ternary of the textbooks); or ternary with incomplete first section. The two types of ternary are about equally common in TCQ. Once these facts have been recognized, it becomes obvious that the words "binary" and "ternary" which describe *thematic* organization only, should always be supplemented by some other terms which will indicate exactly to which of the four types described above a particular movement belongs by virtue of its harmonic or tonal organisation. Meanwhile, "with complete" or "with incomplete first section" are the least clumsy terms that I can devise.

### *The Finale of K.387*

Of the four movements of this Quartet one may be called abnormal in form, though it is not unique in Mozart's output. It is usual to compare the finale of the G major Quartet with the finale of the Symphony in C major, K.551 (the *Jupiter*). And there are certainly points of resemblance, so impossible to overlook indeed, that they are hardly worth mentioning. For example, the first theme of each is in semibreves, and the tempi are not dissimilar. Moreover, the shape of these themes, the direction of each melody is comparable. But here, really, the resemblance ends. For, though there are fugal passages in both movements their meaning and function is very different. The "final fugue" of the C major Symphony is a coda at the end of a normal though unusually contrapuntal sonata-form movement with exposition, development and recapitulation on a symphonic scale. And it is not coda by the accident of place, so to speak, but of its very nature. A fair definition of a classical coda which, in more ways than one, resembles the peroration of a great speech, would be something to the following effect; a brief allusion without further argument (*videlicet* modulation) to topics previously discussed at length. What more perfectly satisfactory way of doing this at the end of

a big symphonic movement than to combine all its themes in multiple counterpoint in a sort of round firmly in the tonic key? The rightness of the finale of this Symphony is such that we almost feel that it is a new form, and that it is the merest accident of history that it is not the prototype of a whole new class of compositions.

But the finale of the G major Quartet is a very different proposition. There the fugal sections occur in the body of the exposition itself and in the recapitulation. The first theme of the first group (IA) is in fact a regular fugal exposition; the transition is a fugal episode of a familiar kind built on figure IB<sub>1</sub> (cf. *Das Wohltemperirte Klavier*, Bk. I, Fugue XVIII, bars 8-10); the second group is again a regular fugal exposition, with a second limb consisting of a new double exposition of the two subject-themes IA and IIA in combination. In each of the two groups there is a second theme which is the very reverse of contrapuntal, the merest harmonized melody. The coda of the movement contains a paragraph of theme IA worked in close stretto.

This, as I hinted, is a very different proposition from the finale of the C major Symphony. Is there any other movement by Mozart which it more resembles? It seems to me that there are far stronger points of resemblance here with the Overture to *Die Zauberflöte*. Let me remind readers very briefly of the shape of that movement. A solemn and sublime Adagio closes into the beginning of an Allegro in sonata-form of which the first group is a regular fugal exposition of a five-bar subject theme (IA) with tonal answer and entries interlocking throughout squarely at the fifth bar; having four entries and two real (i.e. recurring) countersubjects. Except that the latter has three real countersubjects, this is, word for word how we should describe theme IA of K.387 (IV). After this a non-fugal but still polyphonic counterstatement and transition bring us to the threshold of the dominant key and close into the second group theme (IIA) a ten-bar homophonic tune borrowing melodic figures from theme IA. A repetition of theme IIA closes into a non-polyphonic codetta, and the end of the exposition, as everyone knows, is punctuated by the solemn thrice threefold trombone and woodwind chords. The development concerns itself with theme IA and countersubjects and closes at length into the beginning of the recapitulation which presents interesting variations from the beginning of the exposition. The most notable point is that the fugal exposition is dropped and theme IA is heard at first merely harmonized and then in close stretto. Otherwise the recapitulation is regular, with the addition of a short non-contrapuntal coda.

There is no need to labour the point. It is the Overture to *Die Zauberflöte* rather than the finale of the C major Symphony which has the finale of K.387 as elder brother.

What is peculiar to the latter is the systematic setting off against each other of polyphony and homophony at close quarters. The irruption of theme IB into the highly organized texture of theme IA is as exciting and as comic as the best things in *Figaro*. And in the second group the four-square theme IIB fulfils the same function in its more lyrical way. This kind of thing, with the Overture to *Die Zauberflöte* and the finale of the C major Symphony, and

not the mere addition of a final fugue, however noble as in the early D minor Quartet, K.173, represents the true and perfect solution of that special problem of the eighteenth century composer which Dr. Einstein discusses, the problem of reconciling the "galant" and the older "learned" styles.

### *Mozart's Treatment of Sonata-form*

All four main movements of this Quartet are in some sort of sonata-form and that form has never been more subtly handled than by Mozart, though it was more freely and genially treated by Haydn, and more grandly by Beethoven whose greatness has done more to obscure the greatness of Mozart for upwards of 100 years, than any other cause.

The best plan will be to look at the three main sections of a normal sonata-form movement in turn and see what conclusions are to be drawn as to Mozart's habits of composition. There are some broad general principles which may be stated at the outset.

- (a) In a movement in major key the second group is always, without exception, in the key of the dominant major (*cf.* all four movements of K.387) though it may contain rich harmonic digressions as in K.499 (I) for example. Not until Beethoven's piano Sonata, Op. 31, no. 1, is this classical practice varied. In a movement in minor key, the second group is always in the relative major.
- (b) Unlike Haydn, Mozart almost invariably has a new theme for his second group. (*Cf.* the first three movements of K.387.)
- (c) Mozart is a symmetrical composer and he invites us to expect from him an exact recapitulation. But it is one of the most fascinating features of his sonata style that an exact recapitulation is what we rarely find in a large scale work.

### *Exposition*

The first group theme IA of K.387 (I) is unusual in that it is a more lyrical tune than Mozart usually lets us hear at this stage of the drama. *Cf.* for example, the theme IA of K.387 (III) than which nothing could be more formal. But there is another and more important feature of this theme which is uncommon and that is its self-contained quality. It is not usual for a first group theme to come to a definite tonic full close as this one does. But there is a subtle reason. On this full close Mozart bases one of his most delicate and beautiful alterations in the recapitulation. Here it is preceded and put off, as it were, by an interrupted close. (Anyone asked to harmonize this melody who made two successive full closes here would be guilty of an unpardonable solecism.) These are the two formal points about the melody which Mozart expects us to remember until we reach the recapitulation. We shall see what happens there.

K.387 (I) and (II) have counterstatements of their themes IA. A counterstatement in sonata-form is a re-statement, usually of the theme IA (the first theme of the first group) which turns in a different harmonic direction. Not all movements in sonata-form have counterstatements. In some the transition arises out of the single first group theme as in K.387 (III). In others again, it arises out of a second theme of the first group (theme IB in our terminology)



as in K.387 (IV). A counterstatement owes its particular effect to being, like the alterations in the recapitulation but on a much smaller scale, a sort of betrayal of expectation.

The dominant preparations for the second groups of K.387 (I), (III) and (IV) let us hear one of Mozart's favourite devices, namely the obstinate preparation on the dominant of the dominant *minor* key for what is to be, when it arrives, the dominant *major* key. In general terms, this obviously signifies a sort of clouding of the mood, pathetic or mock-pathetic in effect, which is swept away by the safe arrival of the dominant major key. For it is, as I implied, always the dominant major key which does arrive.

Sometimes there is little or, strictly speaking, no dominant preparation at all (as in K.575 (I) in D major where the transition ends with four bars on the *home* dominant which the second group then treats as a key in its own right); and sometimes there is such a long stretch of preparation on the dominant of the dominant, that the ear almost begins to fancy that the composer intends to settle there. Cf. K.499 (I) in D major. This is the difference between the almost unheralded arrival of an important personage in a drama, and the contrary process where the greatest pains are taken to induce a feeling of suspense. Both these extremes are dramatically exciting in their very different ways.

It is noticeable in general that however dry and formal the first group theme or themes may be (though not in K.387 (I)) the second group themes in Mozart are usually in the nature of lyrical tunes; four-square often, but tune-like. K.387 (I) is not the best movement to choose to illustrate this because, for once, the first group theme is rather more of a tune than the second group themes IIA, B and C. But listen to the difference between the beautiful old-maidish theme IA of the slow movement and the lush theme IIA. And while there are no similar grounds for contrasting themes IA and IIA in the finale (as both are fugue subjects) the reader will see what I mean if he will compare themes IB and IIB.

In Mozart's sonata expositions the first group frequently has no more than one theme, though it often has two, as in K.387 (IV). But it is very rarely that we meet a second group which has no more than one single theme, while a movement like K.499 (I) can be shown to have no fewer than four themes in its second group.

All Mozart's sonata expositions end with a codetta, usually a short cadence theme which does no more than enunciate some simple proposition of tonic and dominant. The function of the cadence theme at the end of the exposition in fact is to say, "And that is that". A fascinating device of which Mozart is fond, is to open the development with a re-statement of the cadence theme in minor, as who should reply, "But on the other hand . . .". The beginning of the development of K.499 (I) provides a typical and charming example of this witticism. Other uses to which the cadence theme is put in the development of K.387 (I) will be noticed later. At the moment the point is that the cadence theme clearly divides the (so to speak) information-giving section from the section answering the question, "And then what happened?"

### *Development*

The important facts about the development section in Mozart's (and indeed in all) sonata-form are these:

- (1) The phrase rhythms are new, the paragraphing is in strong contrast to that of the exposition; and
- (2) The harmony moves for the most part in broad sequential progressions, but above all, it moves, and it tends until the last possible moment to avoid the home tonic or dominant.

As the exposition of a movement in major key ends in the dominant, the development usually, but not always, starts from that angle. It would be amusing and perhaps instructive to draw curves representing the harmonic progressions of a number of Mozart's developments. For example, that of the finale of K.387 starts from the tonic, moves through its first half to the extremely remote key of B♭ minor, and thence curves slowly back to the dominant of the home subdominant, in which key the recapitulation begins. This is a sort of semicircle with its highest point at the half-close in B♭ minor and its two ends in the home keys. Other developments would show a steep rise at the outset and a long slow drift back to the home dominant. The opening of the development of the D minor Quartet K.421, with its sudden modulation to the remote key of E♭ (♭ VII from the end of the exposition) is a good example of this sort of harmonic movement in a development.

In corroboration of this view, that the development is essentially a reparagraphing and a harmonic shifting, and only secondarily a "working out" of previously heard material, it is interesting to note that there are in TCQ several developments which, without being unduly short, make hardly any use at all of expositional material. (Cf. K.428 (I) in E♭.) Indeed, K.387 (I) itself opens its development with theme IA but never clearly refers to it again once the development has got under way and makes only the most oblique references to theme IIA. The burden of the development is carried by a figure, x, first heard in the development itself. And the larger part of the development of K.387 (IV) is built on two figures, x, a mere link into the development, and y, a counterpoint to theme IA, first heard in the development itself. The point I am making is that thematic working out in the sense in which, say, Beethoven and Brahms were later to understand it, has really very little to do with Mozart's conception of the form. Of course the essential thing in the developments of Beethoven and Brahms is also the reparagraphing and the unstable harmony; the thematic working-out being with these composers an extra "ingredient" that helps to give consistency to their much larger developments. Mozart, too, feels the need for this stabilizing influence, but achieves it in ways different and perhaps more subtle; at any rate more variable and less crystalline, as we shall see.

Let us glance at the developments of K.387 (I) and (IV). That of the first movement opens with theme IA. There are three false starts, as it were, the composer plays with theme IA in a manner thoroughly characteristic of improvisation, and on the third trial hits on an end figure x, which kindles



his imagination. He now drops IA entirely and proceeds to build with figure x a large paragraph of the sort of sequential modulating harmonies that I have mentioned as characteristic of this part of the design. The paragraph finally poises itself on E minor. Now how does Mozart remind us that this part of the movement has an intimate connection with what went before? At the end of his long paragraph of modulations, he requires a punctuation mark. What could be more in the nature of a full stop than a cadence theme? And so we hear theme S in E minor. That is the sectional function of this moment. For its harmonic function I think we must change our metaphor. If the shifting sequential harmonies of the preceding paragraph resemble a stiff climb, we realize, with the sound of theme S solidly in E minor (the point we have just reached) that we have pulled ourselves successfully up on to a ledge, and there we draw breath for a moment. After this the development starts out again with a new paragraphing of figures not very closely connected with themes IA and IIA. (It seems possible to me, that the connection, if indeed it really exists, was not a conscious one in Mozart's mind.) But notice again the shifting and sequential character of the harmony. And again after the next part of our climb has brought us to the verge of D major, what happens? We find that we have reached a ledge once more—theme S solidly in D major. We draw breath and prepare to climb once more by developing the final figure S.1 of theme S. But stop! D major is the home dominant. In other words our ledge turns out to be on the brow of a great plateau, and all that is left to do is to wipe our boots on D major (treating it<sup>1</sup> as a mere dominant), using shreds of theme S for the purpose, until we are ready to step over on to the immense, level, but by no means featureless table-land of the recapitulation.

The first thing that the development of the finale shows us, is that the exposition ought to be repeated. If the listener is not allowed to hear figure x leading first back into theme IA as if butter would not melt in its mouth, and then later, on into the discursive paragraph at the beginning of the development, he is being defrauded of one of Mozart's most typical and beautiful long-range subtleties. The same observation also applies, but not so strongly, to the repeat of the development and recapitulation. By then the listener will have heard figure x leading twice into the widely modulating paragraph which opens the development. The first time, as we have just noticed, we will have been surprised that it no longer leads into theme IA and the repeat of the exposition. The second time he hears the figure lead into the discursive paragraph, he will be taking it for granted, confidence will have been re-established. But the next time he hears it, on the contrary, he will notice slowly and with re-awakening surprise, that it leads into the first paragraph of the coda, beginning exactly like the first paragraph of the development, constructionally similar, but harmonically as different as chalk from cheese. But this second long repeat is hardly practical politics, at least in public performances.

This development provides a further illustration for anyone not yet convinced that the thematic matter of the development is a matter that does not

concern Mozart unduly. It opens with a figure, x, which we can hardly call expositional, the merest tag of a link passage which derives its sole importance from the use which Mozart makes of it in the development itself, and the whole of the first long paragraph is built on this figure. Indeed, the only reference to expositional material which we hear throughout is in the four interlocking sequential repetitions of theme IA, and even that soon has its thunder stolen by an adventitious accompanying counterpoint (figure y) which leads up to the verge of the recapitulation.

In this movement there is no dominant preparation for the return, and that for the very good reason that it starts from a subdominant angle. Obviously, to prepare your listeners for a subdominant opening to the recapitulation by hammering on the home tonic, treated as a dominant, would ruin the harmonic balance of this or any movement.

### *Recapitulation*

Mozart is a symmetrical composer, but his recapitulations are hardly ever mere mechanical repetitions, and it is oddly depressing to find an evident Mozart lover, in a little book published only 21 years ago, almost apologizing for the exactness of the recapitulation in K.387 (I). For it is not exact, and any hearer who thinks it is is simply not listening.

"Mozart shows his wisdom in giving the listener exactly what his ears desire—a plain repetition which differs only from the exposition in the necessary transposition of the second subject into G major."

But Mozart shows wisdom of a rather higher kind than this; namely a sense of the sublimest possibilities of an art centred on recapitulation, in giving the listener what his ears do *not* expect in parts of each of the five recapitulations or reprises of this Quartet, quite apart from the obvious changes in the recapitulated transitions.

Let us remind ourselves of what we have heard at these points. We decided above that the important formal point in theme IA in K.387 (I) was the interrupted close delaying the final full close. What happens in the recapitulation? The ear follows the course of theme IA which, down to the interrupted close in bar 8, is exactly as before. It then says to itself, "Ah yes, and now we have the answering full close", and if it is a lazy ear it turns over and goes to sleep. But if it is a wakeful ear it gets a shock of pleasure and excitement from the fact that the final full close is delayed by yet one more bar of figure IAr, with still more poignant harmony. This is a hallmark of the very greatest art.

But apart from the purely *ad hoc* changes in the transition, there is another important change in this recapitulation. This is the expansion of themes IIB and IIC, giving a new effect of largeness and breadth comparable (though less mechanically and on a much larger scale) to the effect of the long final line of the Spenserian stanza. And we shall have to notice later the function of the new subdominant harmonies of theme IIC in developing in the listener a sense that the movement is coming to an end.

The changes in the recapitulation of the menuet are likewise of the greatest aesthetic importance. There the main change consists of a drastic foreshortening of theme IA by telescoping its first statement and its counter-statement into one. This is the contrary effect to the one we have just noticed. Here the little drama is hurrying on to its end.

The alteration of melodic detail in the last two bars of this movement shows how securely Mozart counts on our attention and memory. This delicate change is typical of a hundred other such changes in the recapitulations of Mozart's maturity. Cf. for example the recapitulation of the second group in the E $\flat$  Symphony (I) K.543.

Even the trio has its important change in the reprise of section A. Here it is a noble expansion again, and again with subdominant end-harmonies.

But perhaps the most striking and beautiful recapitulatory change in the Quartet is that which takes place in the slow movement theme IA (second limb). Here Mozart simplifies the texture and makes a large expansion, built on figure IB $\bar{1}$ , in order to show up the richest harmonic colours of his palette. And here I should like to digress for a moment, in order to remind readers what these are. They are the highly coloured key relations on the flat side of the tonic, viz.  $\flat$ III (the flat mediant major) and  $\flat$ VI (the flat submediant major). These are the indirect relations to a major tonic obtained by exploring the direct relations of the minor tonic on the same degree of the scale. And much more rarely we also hear  $\flat$ II (the flat supertonic major). Mozart never uses highly-coloured key relations on the sharp side of the tonic (though Haydn loves them) and this means among other things that there is no use listening for bursts of gorgeous key colour in works by Mozart in the minor. In this recapitulation, therefore, Mozart is dwelling on his richest colours ( $\flat$ II) in a digression made for that sole purpose (bars 59-70).

Why does Mozart start the recapitulation of K.387 (IV) from the subdominant angle? When we meet this in the C major piano Sonata K.545, we are conscious of a certain stiffness; there it sounds too much like a *device*; that recapitulation really is mechanical. But most of us cannot feel that the piano sonatas are one of the richest parts of Mozart's output. On the other hand, faced with the splendours of TCQ, it seems to me that our duty is neither to justify nor to condemn, but to seek for understanding. The omission of the first group is made to foreshorten the recapitulation which it does, not only by its own omission, but by the fact that it is now possible and exciting, to hear the combination of the two themes from the outset of the second group. That is, two large paragraphs are dropped from the recapitulation, and that without any sense that it ceases to be a true recapitulation. Mozart evidently feels that the paradox of a sonata-form movement in which the two principal themes are represented by three separate fugal expositions, is not one that can be pushed too far. But a *positive* virtue of this rearrangement is the sensation which the attentive listener cannot miss, with the greater leisure of the exposition at the back of his memory, of a dramatic pace now greatly increased. These facts shed light on the subdominant opening. It would have been false and pompous to have a dramatic dominant preparation for

the return of the slight theme IB in the tonic; and therefore Mozart lets it creep in quietly from the subdominant side, so that the music may press on uninterruptedly towards the second group whose long introductory dominant preparation leading to the remembered combination of the two subject-themes, will serve admirably to restore our sense of the tonic key.

These are the obvious changes in the recapitulation of K.387 (IV). But there is one beautiful *event* which we have yet to notice. An attentive listener will have noticed in the exposition of the second group a pleasant rhythmic detail which our analysis dignifies (wise before the event) with the name of figure IIA1. At the corresponding point in the recapitulation after only three instead of the original four double entries of themes IA and IIA, theme IA, chromatically altered, sails round the corner of an interrupted cadence into the highly coloured key of  $\flat$ VI (E $\flat$  major) with a non-polyphonic accompaniment based on this same rhythmic figure IIA1. Thereafter a leisurely paragraph built on figure IIA1 alone brings matters to a close in G major. The aesthetic gains of the recapitulation here in relation to the remembered exposition are therefore three. There is the "purple patch" of one of Mozart's favourite chromatic keys; there is the excitement of hearing the "insignificant" figure IIA1 developed into a whole new paragraph; and finally there is the effect of a large expansion achieved by the new paragraph in this place. I shall have a word or two to add later about the new upbeat figure leading to the recapitulation of theme IIB, which succeeds this full close.

How do all these recapitulatory changes make their effect? I am indebted to a colleague for the phrase "the betrayal of expectation". Perhaps nothing is more impressive to the human mind than the formation of a *pattern* unless it be the departure from that pattern once it is well established. Mozart does not depart from the patterns of his expositions through inadvertence, or because his memory fails him. He remembers perfectly well what he said in his exposition, and what is more, he evidently expects us to remember it too. Taking that as the *sine qua non* of good listening, he then has a special pleasure, more often than not (TCQ are full of such cases) in giving us what we do not expect, what we could not possibly have foreseen.

### Coda

K.387 (I) has no coda, so that the movement ends exactly as the exposition did. Nevertheless, even from the latter part of the recapitulation of this movement there is something to be learnt about the way of bringing a great classical movement to an end that shall not sound abrupt. Analysis clearly shows the expansion in the recapitulation of themes IIB and IIC. This is the movement broadening to its base. But, more to the point here, it also shows the new subdominant harmony by means of which theme IIC is expanded. Now it is well known that subdominant harmony, more than any other, implies a relaxation of harmonic tension. It will not do, for example, at the outset of any but movements on the very largest scale—and then usually slow movements. But no harmony is more suitable, or more often used by the classics to impress the mind of the listener with the feeling that things are, as it were,

slowing down, with a view to coming to a full stop. The new subdominant harmony in this place therefore is Mozart's substitute for a coda. It fulfils, in its own different way, the same function.

K.387 (IV) on the other hand has a largish coda. The function of a true classical coda, as we remarked above, is to discuss briefly a number of topics previously discussed at length, and to discuss them without further argument, *videlicet* modulation. This is exactly the function of the coda of K.387 (IV). First of all it takes figure x formerly heard as an important part of the development in a long, widely modulating paragraph at the outset, and it lets us hear the same figure x treated in a similar manner, *i.e.* with imitations at every two bars, but this time without modulation. Nothing could indicate more clearly that the argument is over.

The end of this paragraph closes into a fresh paragraph casting a last glance at theme IA. Now the history of music will tell us, if we cannot trust our own ears, that one of the best ways of taking a last glance at a fugue subject is to construct on it a paragraph of close stretto; and this is exactly what Mozart does at this stage. Then a harmonized final expansion to seven bars of theme IA which we have heard passing through so many contrapuntal vicissitudes is a thrilling and decisive end to the movement and the work.

#### Bar-rhythms

Are these seven bars felt as anything so disquieting as a seven-bar phrase? I do not mean to imply that Mozart is not capable and fond of writing seven-, five- or three-bar phrases, though K.387 is relatively free from such paradoxes. Everyone remembers the balancing seven-bar phrases at the beginning of the minuet of the F major Quartet, K.590, the five-bar theme in the second group of the E♭ Symphony, K.543 (I), and the three-bar rhythms of the minuet of the G minor Symphony, K.550. But I cannot recall another work of Mozart which *ends* with an irregular phrase rhythm. The first question we have to settle, therefore, is, "Do these seven bars sound like a seven-bar phrase?". To this, the answer is clearly "No". The time signature of the finale is C, and from the outset it unmistakably falls into successive strong and weak bars. As a proof of this, try playing the theme IA the other way round, *i.e.* beginning with a weak bar, and you will see what I mean. Now if we follow out this division of bars we arrive at the explanation of some points which have puzzled us all, however vaguely, in this finale.

First, theme IIB in the exposition is accentuated weak, strong, etc. What happens to it in the recapitulation? The effect of the two-bar figure leading into the recapitulation of theme IIB is to throw the bar rhythms out, so that theme IIB now begins on a strong bar. It is noticeable, by the way, that this theme will bear either interpretation where theme IA will not. I find it hard to doubt that this is an intentional subtlety which should be brought out rather than submerged in performance.

Bars 259-262, though they do not, in point of numerical fact, set the bar rhythms right again, do serve for a moment to obliterate our sense of strong and weak bars; so that in the succeeding bars Mozart is able to take up the



old alternation of strong and weak as if nothing had happened: and so back to the opening of the development, or on to that of the coda.

This grouping of bars throughout the movement helps to explain the lack of seven-bar feeling about the conclusion. The last seven bars begin and end with a strong bar; write the passage out in the same note values but barred as  $\frac{4}{2}$ , and what you have, which corresponds to what you hear, is a perfectly normal four-bar phrase. In support of this interpretation, it is interesting to notice that Mozart is careful to allow no subsidiary minim or crotchet accents at all; the accompaniment is also in semibreves. Invent for these seven bars a counterpoint in minims or crotchets and see how hopelessly unsatisfactory a conclusion you make to the movement.

### *Conclusion*

The reader will have noticed that I have hardly dwelt on the local and particular beauties of themes in themselves. This is partly because such considerations lie outside the scope of my notes which are rather concerned with matters of long-range form; partly because space is limited; but more because it seems to me that no real purpose is served by underlining the evident and manifest beauties of melodic invention. The most naïve of sensitive listeners needs no help in this matter, he is immediately impressed. I think he is also immediately impressed by the sort of beauties which I have been describing. But if he attempts to discover (as he may wish to do) the reasons for the things which have impressed him, for example in the contrasts between expositions and recapitulations, he must either get down to a detailed analysis himself (of which he may hardly be capable) or he must turn to someone who has done this already. Mozartean criticism cannot consider itself to be flourishing until there exist works of reference giving reliable bar to bar analyses of every important work, or even of every work, listed in Köchel's catalogue. This is not mere pedantry. If I may conclude with a remark from my own experience in analyzing the TCQ in detail during the last year, I will go so far as to say that the result of my labours has been to develop in me a new sense of almost religious awe when faced with the resources of Mozart's genius.

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## Mahler's "Das Lied von der Erde"

BY

HANS TISCHLER

THE *Song of the Earth*, or as it should rather be called, "The Song of Earthly Life", is one of the most beautiful works in orchestral literature. The synthesis of symphonic scope, chamber orchestration and song, achieved in it, has had a great influence upon contemporary music. Indeed, the interesting orchestration and the song character of the work have monopolized the attention of critics to such a degree that its symphonic structure has never been sufficiently clarified. The purpose of this paper is therefore to discuss these three elements that, combined, make the *Song of the Earth* a work of historic significance, besides one of genius.

The work is scored for the following instruments: piccolo, 3 flutes, 3 oboes (cor anglais), E flat clarinet, 3 B flat clarinets, bass clarinet, 3 bassoons (double bassoon), 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, bass tuba, strings, 2 harps, mandoline, celesta, bell chime, triangle, cymbals, tamtam, bass drum, tambourine, kettle drums. This is a small orchestra compared with that of Mahler's earlier symphonies; nevertheless it is not fully employed in any one movement.

However, the impression of chamber orchestration is not the result of these modest demands alone. There are at least two additional features that support this impression.

(I) With few exceptions the scoring does not aim at specifically orchestral effects which are produced chiefly by the following two devices:

- (a) mixtures of various instrumental colours; and
- (b) doublings within several octaves, filling the tonal space with a background from which strongly stressed melodies, also doubled within several octaves, stand out as though in relief.

In the *Song of the Earth* the voices are generally doubled in the same octave only to produce a desired timbre. Every voice retains its timbre composition for some time and, moreover, only few such characteristic timbres are employed in any movement. Thus, for instance the following three voices characterize the first section of No. I:

- (1) horns, sometimes with oboes and clarinets;
- (2) high strings, often with flutes, oboes, and clarinets; and
- (3) low strings, sometimes with clarinets and bassoons.

To enhance the brilliance trumpets are occasionally added to (2) and so are a few tones of bell chime and triad passages for harps, these latter being the only really fill-in instruments. A fourth group of instruments sings the burden: flutes, oboes, and clarinets.

(II) There are very few fill-in chords, doubled only in the same octave like the upper voices. They are almost always dissolved into real voices and

add important rhythmic or melodic impulses to the other parts. This principle of voice leading without much harmonic filling is but the translation of chamber-music style into that of the symphony orchestra.

It is amazing how felicitously Mahler solved the problem of integrating with such orchestration the human voice and symphonic form. After several attempts at introducing singers and chorus into certain movements of symphonies (Nos. 2, 3 and 4), he had apparently dropped the idea. The following three symphonies lack the human voice. In them Mahler acquired the full mastership over pure orchestral setting, while before he had always struck a compromise between orchestral technique and song. Thereafter, with the fullest knowledge at his disposal, he went on to deal with this problem.

At first he reached a unique solution in his choral eighth Symphony. With the following work, the *Song of the Earth*—which Mahler did not want to call his ninth, in an attempt to stave off the fate that had befallen Beethoven and Bruckner—he solved the problem of the symphony with solo voice. In either work he established a thorough balance between voices and orchestra in a brilliant manner. In the earlier one Mahler was able to follow such partial examples as Beethoven's Ninth and Liszt's *Faust* and *Dante* symphonies. But with the *Song of the Earth* he created a completely new approach, if we except the partial anticipations in his own earlier symphonies and orchestral song cycles. This approach influenced many other composers.

Mahler's sense of dramatic logic led him to construct larger units out of several movements within the symphony. He had built such "parts" in his symphonies Nos. 3, 5 and 7 and did so in both the Eighth and the *Song of the Earth*. In the latter work this has been recognized, but the symphonic structure of the whole has been consistently misunderstood.

The tonalities of the six movements are as follows:

I	II	III	IV	V	VI
A minor	D minor	B flat major	G major	A major	C minor—C major

Thus the first "part", consisting of Nos. I–V, has A minor for its main key, Nos. II–IV being of sub-dominant character, while No. V stands in the usual tonic major. No. VI forms a second "part" in itself as long as all five previous movements together. It may be described as a long coda in the relative major, which is darkened for a considerable time by its tonic minor. The C major of the coda of No. VI connects both "parts", being the relative major of the one and the tonic major of the other.

This double connection is further emphasized by a fine psychological device. The melodic material of the entire work is largely based on the pentatonic scale. This feature unifies the whole and simultaneously evokes the impression of a Chinese background though there is no real attempt at imitating Far-Eastern music here, as in the works of several of Mahler's contemporaries. The pentatonic scale is used not only melodically but also harmonically, especially in No. VI, where Mahler derives from it the chord C–E–G–A. This chord contains both the triad of the main key of the first "part" and that of the tonic major of the second one. Every musical listener



perceives the two-fold function of this real "double klang",<sup>1</sup> at least subconsciously.

Consideration of the form of the various movements will further clarify the symphonic structure of the work. No. I, "The Drinking Song of the Earth's Sorrow" (after Li-Tai-Pe by Hans Bethge, p. 21f<sup>2</sup>), has four musical stanzas:

A        A        B        A<sub>1</sub>        Coda  
up to N<sup>3</sup>I2 — N25 — N39 — N48 — to end

"B" represents a sonata development with one short new motif. The key of this section, F minor, corroborates this view, since it is the most characteristic of Mahler's development keys.<sup>4</sup> "A<sub>1</sub>" is a restatement with rearrangements of motifs, so typical of Mahler in such places.<sup>5</sup> And here again the return of A minor confirms the analysis. Thus No. I corresponds to the usual first movement of a symphony.

No. II, "The Lonely Man in Autumn" (after Chang-Tze, H.B., p. 59), has its four text stanzas arranged very similarly to No. I:

I<sup>6</sup> ,    A    A        B    I + A ,    I  
up to N<sub>3</sub>M<sup>7</sup>4 — N7 — N11,M4 — N15 — N19,M5 — to end

"B" again represents the sonata development. The sonata-form is here modified by the addition of an introduction, which is repeated at the end and, connected with the first section of the fourth stanza, at the beginning of the restatement. (Sonata-form is not unusual in Mahler's slow movements; it is also used in the second movement of the sixth Symphony.)

No. III, "Of Youth" (after Li-Tai-Pe, H.B., p. 23), is a kind of menuetto with alternative:

I ,    A        B        A  
up to N2 — N6 — N14 — to end

No. IV, "Of Beauty" (after Li-Tai-Pe, H.B., p. 26f), is again a sort of sonata-form, though smaller and without repetition of the statement. It may be called a sonatina:

I ,    A        B        A<sub>1</sub> ,    Coda  
up to N1 — N7 — N16 — M4,N21 — to end

The melodic rearrangements in the restatement are here especially interesting. (Cf. Nos. I and VI.)

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Georg Capellen, *Fortschrittliche Harmonie- und Melodielehre*, Leipzig, 1908.

<sup>2</sup> Hans Bethge, *Die chinesische Flöte*, Leipzig, 1917, hereafter abbreviated "H.B."; all texts are a little differently worded by Mahler.

<sup>3</sup> "N" stands for the number printed in the orchestral score.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the author's articles, "The Symphonic Problem in Mahler's Works", *Chord and Discord*, 1941, p. 20, and, forthcoming in *Musicology*, "Key Symbolism versus Progressive Tonality".

<sup>5</sup> This idea is more broadly treated in the author's Ph.D. thesis, *Die Harmonik in den Werken Gustav Mahlers*, Vienna, 1937, and his article, "Musical Form in Gustav Mahler's Works", forthcoming in *Musicology*.

<sup>6</sup> "I" stands for "Introduction".

<sup>7</sup> "M" stands for "measure"; for example, N<sub>3</sub>M<sub>4</sub> means "4 measures after N<sub>3</sub>"; M<sub>4</sub>N<sub>21</sub> means "4 measures before N<sub>21</sub>".

No. V, "The Drunkard in Spring" (after Li-Tai-Pe, H.B., p. 28f), is the gay finale of the first "part". It provides the only example of pure strophic form, actually double strophic form, in the work and is thus very much like a final rondo. The only irregularity occurs when the second part of the double stanza appears by itself between the fourth and fifth pairs as a necessary modulatory link between two keys:

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} A + B & A & + & B & A & + & B \\ \text{up to } N_1 - N_2 - N_3, M_3 - N_4, M_3 - N_6 - N_7 - \\ A & + & B & B & A & + & B \\ - N_8, M_2 - N_{10}, M_3 - N_{11}, M_2 - N_{13}, M_1 - \text{to end} \end{array}$$

No. VI, "The Parting" (combination of two poems, respectively by Mong-Kao-Yen and Wang-Wei, H.B., pp. 18, 19), again is in sonata-form. It is one of those movements that, because of its complicated structure, has been repeatedly described as a phantasy, like the finale of the second Symphony and the second "part" of the eighth. Since it is a song, critics have been satisfied to call it a "through-composed" song with recitatives. In fact it is cast in a sonata-form whose various complications can be traced severally in other movements of Mahler's symphonies:

- (1) Melodic rearrangements in the restatement with regard to the statement;
- (2) a second development—also rearranged with respect to the regular first development—after the recapitulation;
- (3) new material in the development, which is connected with material from the exposition to form new groups; in addition,
- (4) the restatement is enlarged by an internal development, of motives not worked out in the regular development, being inserted in part before and in part after the second section of the first subject.

Thus the form may be briefly analysed as follows:

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} A & & B & & A & & D^s_1 \\ a - b - a & c_1 - c_2 & a - b & & & & \\ \text{up to } N_3 - N_4 - N_7 - N_{13} - N_{18} - N_{22} - N_{23} - N_{38} - \\ A & B & D_2 & \text{Coda} & & & \\ a - a' - b - a' & c'_2 & & & & & \\ - N_{41} - N_{48} - N_{49} - N_{55} - N_{58} - N_{65}, M_3 - \text{to end} \end{array}$$

To sum up: The first "part", Nos. I-V, develops like a classic symphony. The only addition to the usual design is No. IV, which is not unusual in the period. (Mahler's unfinished tenth Symphony also includes a rather extended sonata movement as No. IV.) The second "part", No. VI, is an immense, tragic coda. The whole disposition is comparable, though on a far higher plane, to Mahler's third Symphony, in reverse order. A final chart will reveal the symphonic ground plan of the entire work:

I	II	III	IV	V	VI
sonata	sonata	alternativo	sonatina	rondo	sonata
fast	slow	(menuet)	(intermezzo)	fast	(dramatic coda)
A minor	D minor	B flat major	G major	A major	C minor-C major

\* "D" stands for "development".

## Ernest Bloch and Modern Music\*

BY

JOHN HASTINGS

"PERHAPS modern music", says Schopenhauer, in Professor Irwin Edman's reincarnation of him in *Philosopher's Quest*,

"does peculiarly catch the note of reality. Its discords and dissonances, its broken melodies, its shattered harmonies—these are the very nature of the essence of things, the blind frustrations of the reasonless desire, the futile reiterations of the will always doomed to futility. Perhaps the music of your day is something like the music I have been waiting for. But, from the little I have heard of it, there is something missing: the touching quality of song, the poignance of feeling. It is the geometry of tragedy rather than the heartbreak of it that these cerebral young composers have caught. But if ever the great musician comes, he will have caught the very tone of world sorrow itself, and of human fatality, and in listening we will become one with it and our own little tragedies will find their fulfilment in transfigured union with the tragedy of all things."

If anybody knows what Schopenhauer would say to our time it should be Professor Edman. But I have a notion that the philosopher, relieved of the Edman ventriloquism, would be at least as thorough as he was clear. And chances are that, while continuing to deplore the existing geometry of tragedy, he would balance the books with the discovery of the great musician Professor Edman has him looking for without finding. In fact, it is almost uncanny that so accurate a description could be written of that musician when the author, to all appearances, does not know him at all. Certainly no musical Missing Persons Bureau, handed the word-picture of the composer sought, could fail for long to identify him as Ernest Bloch.

To be sure, Bloch can no longer claim the youthfulness that Professor Edman associates with "modernism"; yet he belongs to the "music of our day" more meaningfully than some have been able to discern. In contrast to the "cerebral young composers", there is not lacking in him "the touching quality of song, the poignance of feeling". And, almost alone, he has stood out against the geometry of tragedy with scores that have, like no one else's in our time, caught the very tone of world sorrow and of human fatality.

That Professor Edman could overlook even so major a master is not hard to understand. For the music of Bloch has too often been by-passed for the novel, the spectacular and the chic. Unlike those who have strained to be up-to-date more than to be artistically communicative, Bloch never succumbed to the aesthetic gangrene of his time. He had no interest in fashions, cults, isms, formulas or systems. And he had no use for the sensationalism that was the crutch of many a precarious celebrity. For these reasons his music, while it has steadily consolidated its grip upon a growing audience, has never

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been the vogue; and therefore it has often been snubbed by that sector of the critical fraternity that follows every mode like a housemaid with a dustpan after a shedding dog.

Bloch believes that the artistic representation of a world can be true only if it comes from the honest response of the native instinct to reality—not if it is hatched, like an algebraic theorem, from an intellectual preconception of that reality. He has refused to acknowledge that any man can be a spokesman for an age whose public neither responds to what he has to offer, agrees with his basic premises, nor can even bear to listen to him more than once. His music has shown the spontaneous forthrightness that, in most of his contemporaries, arbitrary theorizing has strangled in its bassinet. His, indeed, is the miracle of whole genius which, occurring so seldom in any generation, transcends the cocoon of “conditioning factors”, of which it is never essentially a part.

Bloch's example proves that if a man has genius to begin with, the sickness of his age is no excuse for the infection of his art. Its special lesson is that many of the others who failed where he succeeded, often greatly gifted men, were only half-geniuses or imperfect geniuses who voluntarily surrendered to the spiritual damage of their world. The contrast of such a man against such a background provides an illuminating commentary upon a whole epoch.

Seen in the spectrum of its cultural expression, that epoch of two decades between wars can only impress us with its overpowering spiritual atrophy. We could, in fact, undoubtedly reconstruct the civic bankruptcy of the Twenties and Thirties from the aesthetic bankruptcy alone that equally pervaded them. For it would take scant argument to prove that the paralysis of the creative mind which brought us the “Vertigralists” and the twelve-tone scale was the exact counterpart of the paralysis of the political mind that brought us to Munich and Pearl Harbour. There was no reason we shouldn't have detected the same sickroom odour in the art gallery we would have sniffed in Parliament if our noses had been in adequate sniffing order. The germ the patient was dying from in both wards was the same: the germ of moral dry-rot. The tragedy is that the patient's decline seems now to have been more voluntary than our determinism would allow us to admit, and the death-rattle he uttered instead of music was only a refusal to rally to the challenge.

The setting, then, against which Bloch composed the major part of his output was a dolefully barren *mise-en-scène*. All the trick gadgetry that must be called on when the well runs dry, rattletrap and ramshackle alike, was noisily there: the mechanistic apparatus of atonalism which, backed up by pretentious and essentially bogus because meaningless scholarship, was actually a kind of musical lockjaw; the theory of “music for use”, like a Bendix washer; the faddism of music-for-the-eye which, like Victorian children, was intended (with ample justification) to be seen and not heard; dissonant neo-classicism whose formalistic decorum and “correctness” claimed critical immunity for its pointlessness and cacophony; “horizontalism” with its insistence that harmony ride not upsy-daisy but sidesaddle; experiments in orchestration involving wind-machines, fire sirens, steamboat whistles, outboard motors,

cement-mixers, sandblasters and, in all probability, the kitchen sink; "new" scales like the latest labour-saving can-opener; the rash of "tone-clusters" for the production of which a piano was not fingered but struck with a blunt object like a thug—a fist, say, or an elbow, or, if nothing else was handy, the piano stool; and, last but not least, the philosophy that music is only another expression of the "class struggle", according to which diminished sevenths are spokesmen of the proletariat, whereas Neapolitan sixths are only capitalist propaganda of the most bourgeois, reactionary kind.

This was the era of wonderful nonsense, when any composer more intent on getting his name in the papers than on serious creative activity could promote anything from a back-to-Bach movement to a new school for "schematic thematic chromatics". One headline-snatcher even came up with the howler that some day all music, instead of being played, would be read like a book, which was like saying that the housing shortage could be solved not by building houses but by distributing architectural blue-prints. No fantasy was too crackbrained to get a hearing.

What it all added up to was that a mask had come over the face of music, completing a *Mardi Gras* costume that was, in all, exhibitionist, a defence mechanism, a comfortable hideout, and the accomplishment of that ilk of vandals that sticks figleaves on Michelangelos. The purpose of the mask was to conceal a gaping hollowness and poverty within. Obviously, a very real loss of faith was at the bottom of the cave-in. But it is not with the loss of faith that we have our quarrel. It is with the moral stupefaction and intellectual immaturity with which that loss was met, and which were used as a shield to advance a decadence that, because it was as synthetic as its sponsorship, was fundamentally not a decadence at all. It would not require a psychoanalyst to diagnose so neurotic a psychological climate as schizoid—and schizoid beyond that measure of detachment which the schizophrenic so often finds useful to him as an artist. For here was a living organism that had turned against itself, using the very means of its own promotion as the weapon of suicide. Such din, in fact, came forth from music's determined self-destruction that a common question in the concert hall in those days, reversing the cliché, was, "It's ugly, but is it art?"

With such conscientious paranoia Bloch has had simply nothing to do. Instead, he has gone his own way, consistently alone, and often, by the people who "matter" most, unhonoured and unsung. What has set him apart has been his whimsical idea that music is a whole spiritual expression involving on the part of both composer and listener, not the use of the microscope and the seismograph, but the exercise of the mind undivorced from the heart and the activation of the spirit unalienated from the pulse. He is one of the few present-day composers to whom being different at all costs is an undignified motive and who has been able to distinguish between originality and the eccentricity that, calling itself by that name, is actually—like the man who can think up nothing better to stand out from the crowd than to walk down the street on his hands instead of his feet—only the humdrum in reverse. Yet Bloch's music, dismissed by the shock-troops of the chic because it fits no



known category of orthodox 'unorthodoxy, is as fresh, as personal, as much his own and no other's as any that has been composed since Debussy.

The reason is not hard to find: Bloch wrote out of himself. In so doing, he made capital sport of those who wrote only out of an over-preoccupation with their materials and their concussion effects on the loges and who, therefore, producing works that already sound dated today, best exemplify Wilde's observation that "nothing is so dangerous as being too modern; one is apt to grow old-fashioned quite suddenly".

If Bloch is "old-fashioned" at all, it is in the sense that he belongs, as Ernest Newman has pointed out, to the tradition of Beethoven rather than to the tradition of Arnold Schönberg. This is a tradition of release rather than a tradition of repression, a tradition of expansion as opposed to contraction, a tradition of the ear as against the eye, a tradition of emotional leverage in contrast to one of intellectual legislation, a warmly human tradition in contradistinction to a coldly mechanical one. He has been concerned with the technology of his craft only as a means to an imaginative end, whereas, with Schönberg, the tail wags the dog. To Bloch all systems like the twelve-tone theory are, musically, a kind of hardening of the arteries and represent, "ideologically", an aesthetic-scientific totalitarianism, a musicological Marxism, a dialectical materialism of counterpoint according to which tones are ordered quite as "inevitably" and literal-mindedly as economic determinism claims the subjects of the State are "conditioned". And to him they are a horror, most particularly when they sprain a work of such poignant imagination as the Alban Berg *Wozzeck*, whose romantic psychological impressionism, though set forth as an example of a chromatic scheme, succeeds (perhaps because it is closer to Debussy than to Schönberg) not because of but in spite of the formula.

Indeed, both as philosopher and musician, Bloch is opposed to almost everything that has come to be termed "modernist". And where he is the spiritual brother of Moussorgsky and the Hindemith of *Mathis der Maler*, he is also the spiritual antithesis of the Hindemith of the *Gebrauchsmusik* phase. If he has looked upon music as experience rather than recipe, he has also looked upon it as expression rather than convenience.

Amid the prevailing sterility of his cultural world, Bloch has truly been a voice crying in the wilderness. And yet, perhaps the most remarkable aspect of his music is that, for all its position of outsider to contemporary mainstreams, it comes through as an extraordinarily probing portrait of our times which the essential timelessness of its character does nothing to dissipate. Such a portrait becomes all the more incredible when one realizes that he has evoked the chaos and hysteria of our epoch without, in any measure, stooping to the dissolution that was their principal by-product. For, while he has utilized the whole arsenal of the modern composer's artillery, from dissonance to atonality, he has maintained the classic rather than the contemporary attitude towards its usage: he has been the master of the machinery; he has never allowed the machinery to master him. The effect has been that of a prophet from the Old Testament transplanted into the present with all its



ferment and complexity, and moving about amid the toppling masonry without forfeiting either his understanding or his majesty.

The lofty stature arising from this link with the great past is such as has not been heard, perhaps, since Mahler. It is doubtful, indeed, if any musically knowledgeable person could listen to Bloch's piano Quintet or the violin and piano Sonata or the viola *Suite* without realizing that they stand as close in structural grandeur and moral and emotional passion to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as they do, in psychological sophistication, to the twentieth. Here, unmistakably, are the utterances of a wide-ranged spirit which combine the nobility of a former age with the disillusion of the present, fusing the two into a whole statement of our spiritual condition which, while not forgetting its disorder and confusion, is able to dignify it with the reminder that the past is of our destiny.

Bloch's has been the voice of faith in a cynical era. But a faith without glibness or automatism: a faith that has passed through the bitterest sufferings of our time and has emerged, not unscathed, but mindful of the eminence that lies behind us and looking with some measure of hope into the future. In his music, he has seen life piercingly and seen it whole. The world Bloch has created is a whole world, as filled as the one we call real with tumult and shouting, with longing and despair, with savagery and frustration, and with tenderness and loveliness and enchantment. He has not blinked at tragedy; but he has not stopped with it, either. And against all the howlings of the negative voices, he seems to beckon us towards the possibility of something better.

This positive element—which is not contradicted by the predominantly tragic cast of all his work—consists less in facile optimism than in the deeply religious nature that pervades everything Bloch has composed. The fact, indeed, that the creation of music is a kind of sacrament to Bloch is the particular attribute that sets him apart from most of his contemporaries. And yet, while that religious essence may have expressed itself most eloquently in the more notably Hebraic works, like the *Sacred Service*, *Schelomo*, the *Israel* Symphony and the *Three Jewish Poems*, it is really beyond all ecclesiastical connotation in a dimension that has nothing to do with the synagogue. Actually it lies within the very fabric of the music itself, in the simple maintenance of a traditional tonality. For all the *ersatz* organology often substituted in its place, nothing could be more anarchic than the abandonment of such tonality. Composition that does not return to a basic *do* is like a deacon who does not believe in God: each is pretending to serve a cause while declaring that cause to be mythical.

The total desertion of atonalism by composers who have matured since it was modish is surely evidence enough for the prosecution. The adherence, meanwhile, of Ernest Bloch to the traditional inner framework of musical architecture is the most eloquent testimony he could have made of his persevering trust in the essential edifice of the cosmos as the great minds of the past have always seen it. The elegiac note so characteristic of his music should not put us off. Perhaps a man never believes so truly as when lamenting his

disbelief, because in that lamentation is dramatized the clamorous need to believe—and the need to believe is often the same as to believe.

How much of the virtual sacerdotalism of Bloch's music lies outside the composer's consecration to his art and inside the temple of the Hebrew religion itself perhaps no one not of that faith can properly speak. It may be that Bloch is a "Jewish composer" in the same sense that Debussy used to like to call himself *musicien français*—a sense, that is, characterizing his derivations and identifying the indigenous nature of his work, but not necessarily limiting his significance or appeal to geographical or, as in Bloch's case, religious boundaries.

To be sure, Bloch has spoken in no uncertain terms of his concern with the Hebrew spirit, but the emphasis is revealing: "It is not my purpose, not my desire", he has said

"to attempt a 'reconstitution' of Jewish music, or to base my work on melodies more or less authentic. I am not an archaeologist. I hold it of first importance to write good, genuine music. It is the Jewish soul that interests me, the complex, glowing, agitated soul that I feel vibrating throughout the Bible . . . the freshness and naïveté of the Patriarchs; the violence of the Prophetic Books; the Jew's savage love of justice; the despair of the *Ecclesiastes*; the sorrow and the immensity of the book of *Job*; the sensuality of the *Song of Songs*".

Notice that Bloch is not occupied with exploiting any hypothetical traits that might be said to set apart "the Jewish character"; rather he is inspired by the profoundest qualities in human nature itself as they may be coloured and illumined in the people he loves and of whom he is one. Neither freshness, naïveté, violence nor love of justice, despair and sensuality, are features exclusive to any ethnic or religious group. And the power of his music to move Jew and non-Jew alike is the final repudiation of any such arbitrary lines of demarcation which, to each, is to "draw the circle that shuts him out" from some vital part of the whole human family.

Bloch's is a far more universal mind than can be arrested at the borders of meaningless dichotomies. To call the reflections of Solomon, as voiced in *Schelomo*, an address merely to the Jewish people would be like calling the Sermon on the Mount a picturesque example of foreign lore. Put into effect, the hypothesis would annihilate not only Christianity but all religion. Bloch speaks rather of the human soul entire; more precisely, he speaks to it.

Undoubtedly, the metaphysics Bloch studied and lectured on in Switzerland show through the interstices of his scores, and explain not only much of his universality but how it was that, when religion went out of music and sociology and psychiatry came in, he was incapable of following the crowd. His art simply was too vast to be contained in the capsules that misuse had made of the social sciences. Many of the most burning questions of the day had, for him, no meaning, obviated as they were by a higher perspective: for the diseases of society were the frontier beyond which he had set himself to penetrate.

One of those questions still plagues the more rationalistic of our self-conscious composers: What is the function of art? Is it to provide a solace

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for the human heart or is it an impersonal transcript of civilization's general cardiac condition? Is it, in short, a sedative or a stethoscope?

To Bloch it is both and neither. For the question is badly off centre, by seeking to limit the aesthetic prerogative to one or the other of two factors: both are piecework of the artist's office, neither taxing its cabinet of instruments nor representing its principal service. It's like asking: What is an apple? Is it round or is it red? When it may be both and still elude description.

The work of Bloch is all-encompassing: it is all things to all men. The paradox is that, despite his enormous range of vision, no scrutiny of man's living has been more intimate than Bloch's and no orientation emotionally more articulate. In the music that has ensued, the cosmic and the microcosmic join together into a perfect union. From it the ear catches the most particularized detail, housed though that detail may be in a construction of the most imposing scope: there is nuance within magnitude. The mind responsible for what we have heard is as clear about the whole as it is thorough about the parts. We never question either that Bloch has observed the material condition or that he has related that condition to the infinite. What has come from that relation in his music is no glacial abstractionism but a sympathetic human warmth based on a complete idea, in which is embodied a brotherhood as explicit as it is universal, for a counterpart of whose magnificence one must go back to the Beethoven of the "Ode to Joy".

For only, perhaps, in Beethoven do we find a spirit with which Bloch's, in its sense of struggle and conflict and aspiration, may be compared. Indeed, the life work of each bears a striking spiritual resemblance to the other, for the centre of both is a compassionate preoccupation with the human predicament. Because, moreover, Bloch's greatness, like that of the composer of the *Eroica* and the *Missa Solemnis*, goes beyond purely musical boundaries into a mystical and philosophic realm, no one acquainted with both was surprised when Ernest Newman remarked their singular affinity. Referring to Bloch's second string Quartet<sup>1</sup> as "the finest work of our time in this genre", the perhaps foremost music critic of our time declared it "worthy to stand beside the last quartets of Beethoven". Certainly the comparison is more than fortuitous. Perhaps Beethoven alone, of all the composers we know, would be capable of the intense dynamic relationships that distinguish this among so many other of Bloch's achievements. Even as the Ninth Symphony expresses a love of man that in no way depends on the inspiring words of Schiller, so the music of Bloch expresses the most passionate democracy that needs no programme notes to his *America Rhapsody* to become communicable. For the music, from Bloch as from Beethoven, belongs to a grandly humanist tradition.

That humanism, in fact, is the moral and emotional backbone of everything Bloch has composed. Difficult and complex as his second Quartet may be, it is the animating force of that masterpiece quite as much as it is the fiery core of *Schelomo*. For, while he has never written a more "radical" work,

<sup>1</sup> The work which, played with consummate musicianship by the Grillers in February, 1947, was awarded the chamber music prize for the season by the New York Music Critics' Circle.

harmonically, than this Quartet—the frequent dissonance of its voice-writing, in fact, carries it close to certain works in the same form from Bartók's middle phase without, however, once forfeiting its grip upon the springs of common feeling—Bloch may never have achieved a more perfect balance between the affective and the intellectual, whose discipline, far from restricting his emotional compass, only sets it off to better advantage.

The very breadth of the passacaglia theme which dominates the Quartet fairly proclaims its composer's assurance of human dignity. The workmanship, the skill with which a most compound<sup>2</sup> organism has been constructed, is eloquent testimony to Bloch's belief in what he has often referred to as "hierarchy": the concept of the formal structure of things as proof of a plan of high human destiny. And yet the loneliness and disillusion of the opening movement with its arabesque-like motif, its wistful, introspective poetry of dream, amply indicate that, for all the affirmation of his faith, he has not forgotten the searing doubts, the "tone of world sorrow and human fatality", with which our age is afflicted. The rhythmic vigour of the second movement seems to imply a resurgence born even of desperation of that dogged invincibility which lies at the heart of human survival, and which only the passing hopelessness and resignation of the third can even temporarily contradict. As for the fourth movement, it is a world in itself, a vivid energetic human world full of dazzling contrasts. The cumulative excitement of the great passacaglia, prefaced by a pizzicato passage of the most electric effect and followed by the extraordinary fugue and the extended coda of the "Epilogue", testifies to the vitality and depth of Bloch's response to the sensational world.

The entire Quartet, indeed, is so remarkable a blending of voices, with each heard canonically like the members of a courtly debating team; so deft a weaving together of themes, with the sad arabesque-like motif running throughout the piece to its last mournful recollection in the final measure; so fabulous a reconnaissance into terrains of sound-combinations and tone values too rarefied to be accessible to any but the most phenomenally sensitive ear—that a hearing of its performance is like eavesdropping on a sorcerer's magic. By the time the work comes to a close it is impossible not to feel that we have been granted an experience comparable to little, if anything, we have known before.

For the cultural historian it may be that the second Quartet will be to the viola *Suite* (and its period) what *Meistersinger*, say, is to *Tristan*: a work of the final maturity of creative perspective in contrast to one of the burgeoning maturity of a creative prime. For the awe and astonishment and admiration we feel for the second Quartet do not, for all its genius, persuade us to forget such masterful works as the viola *Suite* that were its logical forerunners. Already, I suspect, the *Suite* (1918-19) has become a kind of classic, regarded by most musicians as one of the few great works of all time written for that

<sup>2</sup> A little too compound, apparently, for a leading newspaper critic who, even after having seen the score of what is one of Bloch's most prodigiously architectural works, wrote of the second Quartet that "it follows no pattern"!

instrument. The soaring lyricism of its melodic line against the often savage bitterness of its underlying thought makes it a provocative and deeply moving imaginative exploration.

Similar qualities are evident in Bloch's Sonata for violin and piano from the same period, a composition of elemental force and often a brooding, psychological, even Dostoevskian pallor. The subsequent piano Quintet (1921-23) was a product of his early years of acclimatization to this country,\* during which he was Director of the Cleveland Institute of Music. No work we have from him is more majestic in sweep, richer or more sensuous in its tonal tapestry or more poignantly affecting. In it we hear the tragic suffering, the piteous outcry, the sense of terror and sinister foreboding that are so typical of Bloch; and the canvas, for a chamber work, is almost symphonic.

Also belonging to this general period are the enormously powerful *Schelomo* (*Rhapsodie Hébraïque*) for cello and orchestra (1916), a masterpiece too familiar to require comment; the first Quartet (1916), a model of "romantic" pathos and dramatic fire within a panoply of the most "classical" precision and control; the *Concerto Grosso* for string orchestra and piano obbligato (1924-25), written for his students as an example of the Handelian form in contemporary mode and characterized by exceptional rhythmic vivacity, a plaintive melodic strain, and the distinction of a lively fugue of great colour and variety; and the *America Rhapsody*, which won the *Musical America* award for an orchestral work in 1927. With remarkable impressionist evocation of American History, from the days of the earliest settlers through the Revolution and the Civil War to the "machine age," this *Rhapsody* is Bloch's passionate embrace of the democracy of Whitman.

If the second Quartet is to the viola *Suite* what *Meistersinger* is to *Tristan*, the viola *Suite* is to Bloch's C sharp minor Symphony what *Tristan* is to *Lohengrin*. This Symphony was written when the composer was but twenty, just at the turn of the century. Antedating the recognition of Mahler, it is not only prophetic but seriously preempts much of the originality attributed to Mahler and other composers his work has since influenced, like Shostakovich. Its soaring spirit recalls even more the Beethoven (again!) of the *Pastoral*—the sunlit meadows and the sweep of skies are in it; beyond that, man's endless spiritual struggle and redemption. Bloch calls the Symphony his "optimistic" work, casting a wry reflection on the frequently acid bitterness of much of his subsequent music. It is true: despite the monumental conflict embodied in this work, there hovers above it a surpassing serenity, a promise of benediction which we know the climax cannot fail to fulfil.

The work is incredible for a number of reasons: for none more than the age at which the composer created it. Mozart, the free unintrospective prodigy, we take, mistakenly or not, as a phenomenon of nature. But to conceive that a boy scarcely out of his teens could fashion the searching, psychologically expository music in the C sharp minor Symphony amounts almost to a

\* The United States [Ed.].



profession of belief in necromancy. At the time of its first performance, Romain Rolland wrote:

"Your Symphony is one of the most important works of the modern school. I do not know any work in which a richer, more vigorous, more passionate temperament makes itself felt. . . . From the very first measures to the end of such music one feels at home in it. It has a life of its own; it is not a composition coming from the brain before it was felt".

Bloch's one opera, *Macbeth*, was also composed early in his career and received a resoundingly successful première in Paris at the Opéra-Comique in 1910. Although there is some basis of comparison with *Pelléas*, Bloch's is decidedly less evanescent than the Debussy opera and far more vigorously dramatic. It is a matter of record that Bloch spared no pains to give Shakespeare's drama, from which the libretto of Edmond Fleg was faithfully fashioned, a musical setting ideally appropriate to its psychological and theatrical character.

Other early works include the *Israel Symphony* for full orchestra and two sopranos, two altos and bass (1912-16), an expansive expression of intensely religious cast from which the lamentation "Adonai, Elohim" is especially familiar; his two symphonic poems, customarily played together, *Hiver* and *Printemps* (1905), with their luminous atmospheric impressionism; and the *Three Jewish Poems: Danse, Rite and Cortège Funèbre* (1913), notable for their austere melancholy and driving climactic fervour.

Outstanding among Bloch's compositions that seem to fit no particular period or stylistic phase are the piano Sonata (1935), the violin Concerto (1937-38), the *Evocations* (1938), the *Symphonic Suite* (1943-44); as well as the *Sacred Service*, *The Voice in the Wilderness*, *Four Episodes* for chamber orchestra, and *Helvetia*, all four of which are from the late Twenties and early Thirties.

The piano Sonata, all too seldom played, is a rhapsodic work remarkable for an intensity of poetic ardour, often couched in the harshest terms, that almost bursts the dynamic resources of the piano. Composed in the "grand manner", it requires the ministrations of a pianist with an emotional gamut as large as his technical equipment. Like certain piano works of Prokofiev, it reminds us what the soft, dreamy, delicate music of the impressionists bade us forget: that the piano is a percussion instrument—despite the fact that in the second movement we are treated to a pastorale as shadowy, as finespun, as iridescent as anything the impressionist school has left. Certainly the Sonata makes the fullest possible use of the whole range of the piano's tonal and expressive potentialities, opening with a richly declamatory and even songful *maestoso ed energico* and closing with an *alla marcia* of almost brutal violence. However dissonant and rhythmically spasmodic, the work never entirely abandons either the basic diatonic key-relationships or the melodic cantilena. Here is a composition which, because of its infrequent performance and no recording, is a challenge to the true musicians among today's more enterprising pianists.



As for the violin Concerto,\* that is a work of the most affecting melodiousness and of vibrant, almost primeval power. Utilizing both American, Indian and Oriental themes, it expresses the throbbing atavism characteristic of so much of Bloch's music. Its wide latitude extends from a contemplation of a tribal day to tumultuous celebration of the mechanistic complexities of our own age. It impresses one as a kind of allegory of man's pilgrimage from primitive simplicity to the sophisticated confusions of the present, and seems to call for a rebirth of man's essential unity. It is distinguished by one of the most hauntingly beautiful slow movements in all musical literature.

The *Evocations* is a tone-poem of lustrously oriental configuration and colouring that takes full advantage of the timbre scale of the orchestral medium. The *Symphonic Suite* embraces something of the neo-classicism of the *Concerto Grosso* while maintaining a contemporary modality. Composed of an Overture (*maestoso*), a passacaglia with 22 variations, and a finale that Bloch calls "a kind of *moto perpetuo*" that is "*un peu grotesque*", it affects this writer in much the same way as might a *Brandenburg* Concerto written for full orchestra and given overtones half tragic and half nostalgic. Actually, though, in emotional roundness and impact if not in form, it is closer to Handel than to Bach.

The *Avodath Hakodesh*, a religious service of most exalted character, marks something of a departure for Bloch from many of the features of his usual style. *The Voice in the Wilderness* is a brooding symphonic poem for cello and orchestra which has also provided Bloch with the material (abbreviated) for his piano suite, *Visions et Prophéties*. The *Four Episodes* compose a group of tone-poems whose moods, descriptive fancy and psychological incandescence seem to come from the palette of a visionary but none the less puckish and robust painter. *The Helvétia* is an orchestral score reminiscent of Bloch's native Switzerland.

In addition, Bloch has also written the *Baal Shem Suite* for violin and piano, from which the *Niggun* has already become one of the classic staples in the repertoire of the present-day violinist; vocal settings of Psalms 22, 114 and 137, as well as of a variety of French poems, including Beatrix Rodès' *Poèmes d'Automne*; a number of quartet pieces; and such piano works as the tenuously suggestive *Five Sketches in Sepia*, the *Poems of the Sea*, *In the Night* and *Nirvana*.

If asked to describe the style that is peculiarly Bloch's and no other composer's I should emphasize one attribute that stands out above all others. It is, I think, his spiritual reach, that intense quality so peculiarly intrinsic to his music: the quality of aspiration.

In the world of Bloch's imagination the voices seem forever striving to go beyond traditional limitations: to mount not into the treble but the stratosphere; to descend not into the bass but the Stygian depths; to expand the proportions of form; to burst the very seams of dimension itself. It may be risky to put a psychological and spiritual interpretation on something that

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\* See MUSIC REVIEW, I, i: pp. 72-78 [Ed.].

to many seems merely technological. But to one observer no more lucid demonstration could be made of what is actually the central motivation not only of creative art but of human life as well; the theme of the quest. When Bloch's tonal interlocutors soar to loftier climes than the compact group they belong to is accustomed to engage, we have in notational as well as instrumental terms, but no less in terms of human longing and hunger and desperation, a dazzling instance of man's ceaseless search beyond the perimeters of what he knows. The search, if carried to its logical extremity, must penetrate into those vast spaces whose silence used to terrify Pascal.

In the basic musical lexicon, Bloch is a mystic, a seer. The signal of his restlessness, his impatience with boundaries, his seeking to invade uncharted wilds—this is something neither programmatic nor superimposed; it lies within the very warp and woof of his music. If his instrumental voices are explorers in range and tonality, he is no less an explorer in creative thought. Such is the limitless province of music: it is an atlas of both reality and dreams; it shows what we are and what we desire, what we think and what we pretend, how high we can hope, how low we can despair.

For a composer, in the final analysis, deals with essences, not facts; with meaning at its source rather than with the appearances of meaning. Music is not so much a comment on life as a form of living itself. It takes more than consciousness or logic to encompass it, and for that reason alone defies all effectual censorship. It would be as impossible to censor a flame: you must either let it burn or put it out. When we realize how full an expression is Bloch's music of the elevation of his mind and heart and spirit, we realize the truth of Buffon's "*Le style, c'est l'homme*".

Against the general musical sterility of the epoch in which he has lived, Bloch's position until now has been rather equivocal. Of course, he is inaccessible to those whose tastes have not developed beyond the juke-box perversions of Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninov. For them his music cuts a little close to the bone; it probes too deep into what we feel, into our underlying sorrows and losses and frustrations; and their rejection illustrates a peculiarly American psychosis: the dread of inward understanding. By the various cliques of futurism he is dismissed as a "romantic"—a synonym, presumably, for outmoded. Since, however, such stock labels as "classical" and "romantic" no longer have any semantically fixed meanings, it may be doubted that the epithet has found its mark. The fact is that today we are seeking a return to the free, spontaneous emotionalism of what used to be called romanticism, with composers as dissimilar as Honegger and Hindemith and even Bartók (just before he died) recoiling from their previous scorn of common melodic feeling to write more simply, more naturally, more humanly. Bloch, perhaps alone of all the composers of his time, has never had to shift his policy because he has never lost sight of its goal. That goal was not the sponsoring of fashions, movements or ideologisms but the perfecting of a true musical language through which to communicate with the world. Because his life work has steadily moved in that straight line, it has constantly increased in stature for the honest core of intelligent music-lovers.

Bloch is one of those composers—like Brahms, in particular, but Beethoven and even Bach as well—whom each succeeding generation sees in a different light, now “classical”, now “romantic”, now something else. Just as we used to think of Brahms as a stuffy traditionalist where now we discern the songful lyricism in his music; just as we used to see more of Mozart than of the soul-shaken stormy petrel in Beethoven; just as we used to consider Bach a dry intellectual rather than as the dramatic Vulcan of the tumultuous organ toccatas and the mighty turbulence of the *St. Matthew Passion*, the dreamy poet of the twenty-fifth Goldberg variation—so we shall in time come to recognize the wholeness of Bloch as a creative artist, his equal eminence in the spheres of the intellect and of spontaneous feeling. Perhaps what has most militated against his full acclaim is that he was born into a time that had grown self-conscious about the “heart”, and rightly too, since so much hypothetical use had been made of it; and that he refused to be swept along with the main current of that self-consciousness whose net and synthetic effect was what C. S. Lewis wryly describes as “the horror of The Same Old Thing”.

But Bloch has a deeper understanding of man. He knows that, where the new cannot warm him against the cold, it is precisely “The Same Old Thing” he truly craves: the ageless flame of human love. And, in having fought the “geometry of tragedy” with an art that brought man into “transfigured union with the tragedy of all things”, Bloch has asserted a spiritual integrity that places him with the masters.

### Reviews of Music

Carlos Chavez. *Sinfonia de Antígona*. Full Score. (Schirmer.) 9s. 6d.

A short work (11 minutes), scored for an infernally large orchestra, including 8 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 bassoons, 4 clarinets, and among other things, a junk-shop of percussion. As if to show his economical turn of mind, the composer omits the trombones and one of the oboes. This is presumably an immature work, for it proceeds nowhere by fits and starts.

Rodolfo Halffter. *Pianoforte Sonata in D minor*, Op. 16. (Ediciones Mexicanas de Musica, A.C.) 1947.

Three compact movements, cleanly brought off with many happy touches. There is melodic and rhythmic variety and a definite and pointed Spanish (or Mexican?) style without the nondescript twiddlings so common in this sort of music. Much use is made of “unrelated” triads (often with added sixths or seconds), but the sound is crystalline and charming and does not cloy. The first movement is in the kind of sonata-form that delays its shortened restatement until very late, when it seems like (and is) a coda. On paper the slow movement looks unpromising, but in sound it is attractive and not without depth in its modest way; it contains some interesting diatonic sequences. The finale is a deftly turned rondo, with piquant and witty polytonalities that do not weaken the firm tonic of D minor-major. The whole work is beautifully written, unpretentious, and a pleasure to the ear, and it is not difficult to play.

José Pablo Moncayo. *Three Pieces for Piano*. (Ediciones Mexicanas de Musica, A.C.)

These are brief, dry and insipid, with plenty of pointless patterning. R. S.

## Report from Germany

BY

EVERETT HELM

THE currency reform of 20th June, 1948, has had a nearly disastrous effect on opera and concert life in Germany. Before this date theatres and concert halls were full, since tickets could be bought with almost worthless reichsmarks, at ridiculously low prices, fixed by law. On 20th June the new currency, the Deutsche mark, replaced the reichsmark, and at the same time large quantities of consumer goods appeared in the shops. For the first time in years Germans had the opportunity to buy respectable merchandise, even though few had the money to pay for it.

In the pre-currency reform period, theatre, opera and concerts represented one of the few ways in which the German public could spend money; a box at the opera cost less than a packet of cigarettes. Any performance, be it good or bad, was practically assured of an audience under such conditions. With full houses guaranteed, quality of performance was not always of the highest.

Since the currency reform, the situation has changed radically. The public is buying shoes, kitchen utensils, furniture, rather than theatre and concert tickets. Most concerts, except those presenting the biggest names, attract half-full houses and produce deficits. Even big names do not always draw. A recent sonata recital in Wiesbaden by Walter Giesekeing and the top-ranking cellist Hoelscher failed to sell enough tickets to cover costs. Concert agencies and private musical societies are at their wits' end as to how to continue under present conditions.

The effect of such a situation on young artists is unfortunate and discouraging. With the public demanding well-known names, concert agencies are unwilling to take on new, relatively unknown younger artists. Many of these, discouraged, are turning to other fields in order to earn a living. Others are waiting and hoping for the picture to change and are in the meantime having a difficult time of it.

Orchestras and opera houses are feeling the pinch as well. These, of course, have municipal or state subsidies, without which they could not operate even in normal times. But at present, with attendance figures low, even state subsidies do not prevent the accumulation of large deficits. Opera houses are doing well, on the whole, if they play to 50 per cent. of capacity; orchestras are in a scarcely better position. One orchestra in a well known city, an organization now over 100 years old, is faced by the imminent necessity of disbanding. A recent concert was cancelled when one day before the performance only seventeen tickets had been sold. It is generally hoped and believed that the situation will improve gradually, and there are already some signs of improvement.

There is little doubt about one fact: during the three years between the war's end and the currency reform, a good many cities suffered delusions of grandeur regarding what civic enterprises could be maintained on a long-term basis. Fooled by plentiful, cheap money and resulting full houses, they bit off such projects as are now causing acute indigestion. A small city which normally could support only a modest theatre, established a theatre with twice as many actors as necessary, set up an opera company, an operetta, and a symphony orchestra. It is now manifestly impossible to maintain such an overblown apparatus; actors and musicians are being discharged in a frantic attempt to balance the budget, despite many protests against increasing the number of unemployed. To the present time the cuts and economies have taken the form of decreasing personnel within each organization. The necessity has not yet been realized of cutting out entire organizations. The tradition of each city and town's having its own orchestra, opera and theatre is so strong that a good many of these will have to collapse, financially or artistically, before the necessity of inter-urban co-operation is recognized.

Opera houses and orchestras now find themselves obliged to woo a coy public which parts reluctantly with its money. The wooing appears to take two forms, one desirable, the other unfortunate. On the plus side is the gradual realization that standards of performance must be raised. On the minus side is the conscious attempt to attract the public either by offering cheap theatre and music or by concentrating on the "old chestnuts" (dignified by the title "classical repertoire"). A good many opera houses, for instance, have taken to playing worthless operettas in alternation with more serious operas. Much to the surprise of the managements, the public does not always rise to the bait but turns out in greater numbers for the heavier fare.

In another respect, however, the public is being given what it wants, and loves it. The classical repertoire ("old chestnuts") is distinctly over-played to the virtual exclusion of novelties. Beethoven, Brahms, Strauss (J. and R.), Wagner, Mozart, Bach; these are the proved attractions. (It is not suggested that this is not the case in other countries, but it is exaggerated in Germany.) The public *does* want to hear them *ad infinitum*, and the public is getting them. This is unfortunate because German audiences heard little else for twelve years during the Nazi period. Nazi propaganda emphasized the idea that good music is *German* music, and most good music was written before 1900. It is high time for the German musical public to hear works of such "unknown" composers as Schönberg, Mahler, Stravinsky, Honegger, Prokofiev, Copland, Vaughan Williams, Bartók, Britten. It is the cultural duty, it might seem, of state-subsidized opera houses and orchestras to present modern works in order to broaden the country's musical horizon.

At present those who are doing most in this respect are the radio stations; contemporary music plays a respectable part in their programmes, and performances are often of a high quality. Three stations are leaders in this respect: the Nordwestdeutsche Rundfunk in Hamburg (British Zone); the Südwestfunk in Baden-Baden (French Zone); and Radio Frankfurt (American Zone). These three stations will combine in June to present an important festival of modern music. Invited by Radio Frankfurt in co-operation with the New Society for Music, the orchestras of the two other stations will appear in Frankfurt during the period 19th-27th June in programmes of contemporary music which will also be broadcast.

Premières of Schönberg's violin Concerto and Hindemith's new cello Sonata will be featured. The radio festival will open the annual three-week summer course for modern music which will be held in Darmstadt. This course offers students an opportunity to study contemporary music with well-known performers, composers and theorists; to perform it; and to hear lectures explaining it. Students from nearly all Western European countries and America are expected.

There is scarcely a theatre, an opera house, or an orchestra in Germany to-day which is not having its "crisis". Newspapers are full of accusations and criticisms against local government policy, against theatre directors (Intendants), against all those who contribute to the present crisis. Despite much hue and cry nobody has come up with a definitive cure or solution. The next months promise some interesting developments.

### Season of Italian Opera

THE Music, Art and Drama Society have announced a six-week season of Italian Opera (sung in Italian) at the Stoll Theatre from 14th May to 25th June. The repertoire will consist of *The Barber of Seville*, *Don Pasquale*, *Rigoletto*, *Falstaff*, *La Bohème* and *Tosca*. The musical and vocal directors will be Alberto Erede and Dino Borgioli respectively. Erede will conduct 21 performances and Clemens Krauss and Jonel Perlea 8 each. An account of the productions will be included in the next issue of this journal.



## Music in Performance

### FIRST PERFORMANCES\*

#### AND THEIR REVIEWS

- I. Stravinsky, Ballet Suite: *Orpheus*. (B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra, c. Ansermet, Albert Hall, 16th February.)
- II. Stravinsky, Mass for mixed chorus and double wood quintet. (Suddaby, Wood, Soames, Boyce, B.B.C. Chorus and Symphony Orchestra, c. Ansermet, Third Programme, 19th February.)
- III. Absil, String Trio No. 2. (London String Trio, L.C.M.C., 8th February.)
- IV. Wood, R. W., String Trio. (Ditto.)
- V. Reizenstein, *Divertimento*. (Exploratory Concert Society, Aeolian Quartet, Conway Hall, 11th March.)
- VI. Britten, *A Charm of Lullabies*. (Nancy Evans and Norman Franklin, L.C.M.C., 8th February.)
- VII. Poulenc, *The Tale of Babar the Elephant*. (Belfrage (Speaker) and Poulenc, same concert as III, IV, VI.)
- VIII. Bax, *Concertante* for cor anglais, clarinet, horn and orchestra. (Helen Gaskell, Ralph Clarke, Aubrey Thonger, B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra, c. Sargent, Albert Hall, 2nd March; heard over the radio.)

Unreported by *Daily Express*, *Daily Herald*, *Daily Mail*, and *News Chronicle*, *Orpheus* elicited reactions from *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph* from which one could hardly gather that they referred to the same work. There can be little doubt that the *Times* critic was right in noting emotional depth behind the suite's technical mastery, for depth is not easily noticeable where it is absent. Mr. Herbert Murrill said in his analytical programme note that in the *Air de Danse (Orpheus)* "a theme of classical shape is given to the oboes", and Charles Stuart speaks here of "Stravinsky's neo-antique vein: the idiom of Lully is . . . transfigured by the keener harmonic values of our own day". I submit that in this song of consolation Stravinsky reverts, doubtless with full intent, to the middle section of the Dance of the Blessed Spirits from Gluck's own *Orpheus*. Mr. Murrill also observed that at the end of the work "the horns develop a new theme". On the contrary, the theme derives, invertedly, from the beginning. About one thing everyone except the present critic seems agreed, namely, the splendid performances of both *Orpheus* and the Mass. It therefore behoves me to criticize them in some detail. I cannot understand, for instance, how everyone could have swallowed the affected accents on the double-semiquaver, quaver figures at their first appearance in the *Pas-de-Deux*. The intrinsic metric, melodic, and harmonic accents are here quite enough; anything more destroys the logical flow of the music. Similar absurdities were to be encountered in the Mass, a particularly enraging example being the "*Et iterum venturus est CUM gloria . . .*". I suppose Ansermet thought that since we are inclined to regard the "*cum*" as unaccented, both extra-musically and musically (see, say, Byrd, Bach, Beethoven), and as, moreover, the word here falls on the second half of the first beat, the fact that Stravinsky nevertheless stresses it, must be pushed down our throats. However, the natural accent which the "*cum*" receives harmonically and through the sudden, rising similar motion, will do perfectly well. In general the performance of the Mass, though better than the first one in Milan†, was worse than that of *Orpheus*. Children's voices were not employed, which

\* Including first (public) performances in England.

† See the last issue of this journal.



would have been justified if the adult voices had done much better musically than children; but they didn't. The vocal intonation was what in Hollywood prose would be described as a chronic aural pain in the neck. For example, the sopranos were terribly flat in the first "*Christe eleison*", and the female solo voices' consecutive fifths in the *Gloria* were not sufficiently narrow, Miss Wood being here on the flat side, though she was lavishly sharp at the end of this movement. In the *Agnus Dei*, the (expected) aberrations were particularly severe in sopranos and contraltos in the first vocal section, and in the tenors in the second. Vocal balance: the contraltos' middle c's on "*Christe, Christe*" were too weak, and so was, most disturbingly, the basses' determinant 1st inversion of the A $\flat$  triad before the end of the *Kyrie*. In fact the basses gave a tuberculous rendering of most of their part. Their c-d semiquavers in the *Credo* were almost inaudible, nor was the succeeding "*Qui propter nos homines . . .*" anything like distinct. The same goes for "*Et in Spiritum Sanctum . . .*" and for "*Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum*". Mr. Soames' "*Sabaoth*" did not come out nearly enough; at this point the Milan tenor had an excellent idea of the texture. As for the orchestral and total balance, the worst came to the worst in "*Benedictus qui venit*". Here the bassoons' all-important double-dotted quaver passage was far too soft in relation to oboes and clarinet, and particularly to contraltos and tenors, despite the fact that Stravinsky has marked the bassoon parts *mf* as against the *p* of the other parts! The B.B.C. may, of course, have to take part of the blame for the frequent lack of balance.

With ardent zest for co-ordination, our worthy colleague, Mr. Alan Frank, said in his interval talk that *Orpheus* and the Mass had one thing in common: they were both chamber-musical. One sympathizes with such a search for chamber music in all sorts of slender and clean scorings, what with there being so little real chamber music about. The L.C.M.C. string trios, for instance, left one with the desire to hear a string trio. I think I appreciate Absil's skill, but I find it difficult to agree with Mellers that the trio is "superbly written for the medium", for any work so described must be born out of the combination it is born into. The last movement of the Wood, to be sure, cannot even be said to have been born into it. The (entirely unreported) Reizenstein, on the other hand, is exceptional in that it actually *sounds*—except for a single spot in the last movement's second variation. Of the *Charm of Lullabies* Mr. Hussey wrote that it was "a pastiche singularly lacking in charm". "Pastiche" claims to be an objective observation, so I would challenge Mr. Hussey to indicate wherefrom Britten borrowed, or whose style he imitated in this song cycle. Poulenc's rubbish, while not amusing, is only slightly irritating. His un pianistic piano playing is fascinating. I should have liked to report the first performance of his *Calligrammes* (Wigmore Hall, 21st February), but Messrs. Ibbs and Tillett had restricted the Press on this occasion, whence the only full-size musicological journal in this country which devotes space to concert reviews was not allowed a seat.

The Bax is lax and unexportable.

#### EGON WELLESZ' FIRST SYMPHONY (1945)

THIRD PROGRAMME, 16TH FEBRUARY

Berlin Philharmonic, c. Celibidache

Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk Recording

The Viennese symphony is too old to die. Though many, including even Dika Newlin,<sup>1</sup> believe that it departed with Mahler's Ninth, Franz Schmidt (1874-1939; four symphonies), descending from Brahms and Bruckner, showed how much alive it could still be, and now Egon Wellesz continues from Mahler himself with a C minor Symphony—"in C", as *Radio Times* and announcer said with customary precision—whose most Mahlerian movement, the third and last, is an "adagio of such deep expression, so free from any human frailty or sentimentality",<sup>2</sup> as are only, in Wellesz' own opinion, the

<sup>1</sup> Newlin, D., *Bruckner, Mahler, Schoenberg*, New York, 1947.

<sup>2</sup> Wellesz, E., "Bruckner and his Early Symphonies", *The Listener*, 24.3.49.

adagios of Beethoven, Schubert, and Bruckner. An exaggeration? Yes. But then this is the natural and justified consequence of my first acquaintance with a composer of whose importance, but for Mellers' most apposite apology,<sup>3</sup> my generation would have been completely unaware.

One or two supplementary impressions to Mellers' observations on the Symphony: the slow introduction foreshadows the first subject, part of which reminds one of, and possibly remembers, "Frisch weht der Wind der Heimat zu" from *Tristan*—a relation which would not be of musical, but of psychological interest. This principal theme is made the subject of the development's fugue, which is one of the very few convincing instances of its modern genre. There is nothing unprecedented in the tonal structure of the sonata arch. The movement ends in C major. Among the exceptionally compelling features of the G minor→major scherzo (which the B.B.C. did not allow us to hear in full) is the trio's leading back to the principal section. The scherzo's quintuplet ostinato looks forward to the last, C minor movement. The passage from this adagio which Mellers quotes<sup>3</sup> brings us the movement's first and final C major. Communicating a liberating sadness which only music can express, the end is overpowering in its inevitability.

On the most sober view, the work stands out against most of its contemporaries in that it is soaked in culture. Exoteric evidence: the orchestration. And when shall we have a performance?\*

#### WORLD PREMIERE OF "PRIMA DONNA" AT THE FORTUNE THEATRE

LONDON OPERA CLUB, 23RD FEBRUARY

Except for two—musically critical—sections, Arthur Benjamin's comic oper(ett)a (1933) is a strong resuscitator of what one believed to be a dead tradition. The *quasi* ballet music that makes up the interlude is disputable; the end of the opera is impossible. The former, a Gavotte with Musette-Trio, is a witty, because impure, pastiche of its eighteenth century ancestors—we know the composer to be a master of all sorts of synthetic music. But *qua* intermezzo the piece does not seem to be sufficiently musical. And at the end of the work there is a shortcoming similar in kind, though far worse in degree. I suggest that when the maid appears to yield to the Count, the action is at an end. If you don't want to extend the story, you have either to finish the opera at this point, or else to invest the last, post-dramatic number with so much musical significance that instead of theatrical redundancy there emerges a musical crystallization and interpretation of, or a comment on, the emotions involved in the final dramatic situation. But all we get is the Count's protracted sicilianizing and the maid's "Tiou, tiouee" which, funny at first, soon becomes a bore. I implore the composer to do something, if not about the *entr'acte*, at least about the end. Thus revised the opera should be a great success at next year's Cheltenham Festival, where, upon a chance conversation with one of the organizers, I hope to see it produced.

#### ROYAL SOCIETY OF ARTS

##### Three "Cantor" Lectures on Music

22nd March: MUSIC AND THE COMPOSER

By Antony Hopkins

NEVER has an intelligent and highly gifted composer talked more abominable rubbish, though this sort of thing was to be expected in view of, say, *Lady Rohesia*. He has not yet realized, it appears, that great art is deep. Therefore, upon diagnosing our age's intellectualization of creative processes, he proceeds to prescribe "a change of attitude

\* Mellers, W., "Egon Wellesz and the Austrian Tradition", *Counterpoint*, 1945, and in *Studies in Contemporary Music*, London, 1947.

\* Cf. also "Egon Wellesz—An Austrian Composer in Britain", by Hans F. Redlich; *Music Review*, VII, 69 *et seq.* [Ed.].

towards the lighter things in music"; "greater entertainment value" is the thing! Conjointly with many of his well-meaning colleagues he condemns those composers in the lump who write for "small cliques", and argues profoundly that if only a limited number of people can understand a composer's work, he is not a universal composer. *Figaro* is a work which gets full marks from Mr. Hopkins, though even to-day it is only understood by a surprisingly small clique, while legions skim and misunderstand it with the greatest delight. How the late Beethoven fits into Mr. Hopkins' views I do not know. But then Mr. Hopkins is not among the small clique who have the least understanding of these works, as could be seen when he delivered himself of the following argument: The revolution in music is over. This has been realized by Bartók, Stravinsky, and Hindemith; hence their eventual simplicity. Don't listen to the critics who tell you that such simplicity is simply due to maturity, for what about Beethoven and all the other classical composers? Why, asks Mr. Hopkins triumphantly, don't we see an increase of simplicity at the end of their lives? But, Mr. Hopkins, we do! If it has not yet dawned on you that the limited accessibility of the late Beethoven is due, not to any complexity, but to the depth of his ever-increasing simplicity, you have much to learn and little to lecture. For the rest, your talk would not be worth even this stenographic review, were it not for the fact that it is more dangerously decadent than the dead music you denounce.

#### 29th March: MUSIC AND THE INTERPRETATIVE ARTIST

By Sir Malcolm Sargent

APART from a few illogicalities, such as the comparison between following a musical performance in the score and following a Shakespeare performance in the text, this loosely formed, but well delivered talk will have proved instructive for the layman. In fact even some musicians might benefit from some of Sargent's suggestions, *e.g.* that thoughtlessly complete fidelity to history and to the letter of the score can prevent realization of the work, that a performance must sound, and that the artist must be convinced of his interpretation.

#### 5th April: MUSIC AND THE AUDIENCE

By Sir Steuart Wilson

COMMENDABLY full of factual matter, though not of the lecture's subject matter.

#### ROYAL PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY

Luton Choral Society with Baillie, Soames, Anthony, Groves and Clinton, under Beecham

#### THE CREATION

Albert Hall, 23rd March

BEECHAM'S brilliance, elegance, urbanity, well-rehearsed spontaneity and neglect of depth will always secure his interpretations a stronger response than they merit. At the same time they run the risk of being underestimated by a minority (including this reviewer) who find it difficult to recover from the emetic effect of such things as the slick near quaver (instead of crotchet) on "A-wake, . . . the lyre a-wake!" in the D major chorus, or the shout on the g<sup>♯</sup>-a<sup>♯</sup>-b<sup>♯</sup> "flat-g" semiquavers in the B flat aria's coloratura—a flagrant misinterpretation, this, of the accompaniment's chordal *forte*.

#### ANGLO-AUSTRIAN MUSIC SOCIETY

Wigmore Hall, 26th March

Amadeus Quartet

First London performance (?) of Wellesz' fifth Quartet, Op. 60 (1943)

A MOVING work of strikingly compact form, exceptional, moreover, in that most of it is conceived in terms of its difficult medium. The violent initial *unisono*, however, will never sound; nor even, to be more objective, will it ever be in tune. If one may trust one's

memory of a single hearing of each work, there are interesting affinities between the tonal structures of this Quartet and Schönberg's second Chamber Symphony, first performed in this country less than six months ago. Either work proceeds from the first movement's diatonicism to the "atonal" scherzo (or the scherzo-like section of the second and last movement in the Chamber Symphony), and thence to the slow end in the tonality of the first movement (*i.e.* the climactic last movement in the Quartet). In the case of the Wellesz, however, the contrast between "tonality" and "atonality" is less pronounced, *i.e.* the "tonal" movements are less diatonic than their counterparts in the Schönberg, while the twelve-note piece shows distinct diatonic features.

#### THE B MINOR MASS

BBC Choral Society and Orchestra with Baillie, Jarred, Herbert, Parsons and Anthony, under Boult

Albert Hall 30th March

Das Wesen der H moll-Messe ist ergreifende Erhabenheit—*Albert Schweitzer*

WHEREOF there was no trace in this highly praised interpretation which, together with its execution, left much to be desired. The following, all too meagre selection of criticisms should preferably be read in conjunction with what Schweitzer has to say about the performance of the Mass.

The initial B minor chord, completely out of tune, presaged what we had to expect in the way of choral intonation. At the end of this *Kyrie*, the appearance of the theme in the bass was not brought out nearly enough, and the flop was completed by ending the piece *p(p)* instead of *ff*. The peaceful character of the second *Kyrie's* principal theme remained unrecognized; consequently the lively interpositions did not serve their purpose of stressing the principal theme by contrast. The *vivace* of the *Gloria*, too, started far too *vivace*, later increasing its speed yet further, to land in an idiotic *ritardando* before the *Et in terra pax*, which started too slowly and grew amateurishly slower. The rendering of the joyful violin solo in the *Laudamus* can only be described in Viennese dialect: "Schiab i denn net eh an?" (Can't you see I'm pushing on?); Sir Adrian and Mr. Peatfield have between them found a way of accommodating 8 strong accents in a 4/4 bar. And as in the second *Kyrie*, there was no attempt in the *Gratias agimus* at rendering the contrast between, and at the same time integrating, the two related themes, though this time it was the lively theme that was denied its character; it was scanned and dragged, and its last appearance was its slowest. Another stultifying slowing-down process was to be observed in the *Domine* as soon as the voices entered in an impossibly heavy rhythm. Instead of setting matters right, Boult took up the soloists' cue and continued the *ritornello* in the same manner. The *Qui sedes* was too slow from the start, yet no sooner had Miss Jarred appeared upon the scene than she applied the brake with all her strength. The *Quoniam* would have been passable but for its, in the Albert Hall, unpardonably weak instrumentation. In the (first) *Credo* and the *Confiteor* choruses, too, the instrumentation missed the mark. The ancient intonations in these movements were not sufficiently supported to come out anything like triumphantly. When deciding on the tempo of the first *Credo* movement, moreover, Boult did not think as far as the vocal basses' final climactic augmentation of the intonation; hence he erred lavishly on the slow side. Nor did it occur to him that the all-important crotchet movement in the orchestral bass ought to be phrased. The *Et incarnatus est* came to a miserable end with the apathetic final descent of the ostinato motif, whose simultaneous first appearance in the bass was played away far too meekly, in fact without any understanding. The overwhelming *basso ostinato* of the *Crucifixus* cannot have overwhelmed anybody, since Boult did his best to conceal its existence. The sopranos' distonations reached some of their high-spots (on the top B and A's) in the shaky and none too jubilant rendering of the *Et resurrexit*. *Et in spiritum sanctum* was not, as it should have been, preceded by a short pause, and the life was skilfully choked out of this music—"in unum spiritum sanctum vivificantem"!—

by stressing both beats of the bar with equal vehemence. The heavy string triplets in the *Sanctus* were as enervating as the strings' semiquavers in *Pleni sunt coeli* and *Osanna*, which seemed to illustrate a bicycle race. The adoption of Tovey's suggestion for the *Benedictus* (flute instead of violin solo) resulted in interruptions of the natural flow by breathing pauses, and the flaccidity of the *Dona nobis pacem* brought the blasphemy to the worst possible conclusion.

#### MORLEY COLLEGE CONCERTS SOCIETY

Central Hall, 1st April

First English performance of R. Strauss' *DIVERTIMENTO*, Op. 86, c. Goehr

ONLY a handful of people attended. The composer's programme note on his arrangement for small orchestra of harpsichord pieces by Couperin will tell the absentees what they missed:—

"As my first Couperin Suite was the result of an idea to arrange some pieces in the 18th century style for the ballet of the Vienna State Opera, so this second Suite, which I call 'Divertimento', owes its existence to the suggestion of Clemens Krauss that I arrange some more pieces of the French master for small orchestra for a performance of Pino Mlakar's reconstruction of a ballet originally designed by Le Feuillet (c. 1700). The first performance of this new version (with six pieces added to the first Suite) was at the Munich National Theatre in April, 1941, under the title 'Verklungene Feste'. Nos. 3 and 8 [the last] I have added later for concert performance."

Wherefrom some may conclude that they did not miss much. I agree. The suite is in fact beside criticism. Its musical aims are modest and, of course, easily attained; its significance for the history of music or of Richard Strauss is near nil.

#### "THE IMMORTAL HOUR" AT THE PEOPLE'S PALACE

4th April. Conducted by the composer

"PROBABLY 'The Immortal Hour' is the most completely spontaneous of [Rutland Boughton's] works; the beauty of its melody is beyond question . . ." (H. C. Colles in *Grove*). Indeed, that so far (5th April) no voice should have been raised in utter condemnation of this *Kitsch* *κατ' ἐξοχην* would seem to suggest that our musical society is ill. After Act I, I bolted.

L.C.M.C.

5th April. First performance of work winning Edwin Evans Memorial Prize

Hurwitz Quartet

IF Arnold Schönberg is right that "*Kunst*" does not come from "*Können*," but from "*Müssen*," Elizabeth Maconchy's 5th string Quartet is not art. If he is wrong, it is. In other words, a winner *par excellence*. To be wise after the event is, of course, easy, but preferable to not being wise at all.

H. K.

#### LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Albert Hall, 27th January, 3rd February, 17th March

At a time when the LPO are sustaining a determined effort to re-establish themselves as a first-class orchestra, it is irritating to read an experienced critic writing in a reputable weekly<sup>1</sup> more or less to the effect that standards of performance do not matter, but only the music itself. This is a heresy the obtuseness of which is easily exposed, but it is none the less mischievous because it encourages the majority of the idle English (and we are

<sup>1</sup> Eric Blom in *The Observer*, 3rd April, 1949.



idle in matters of art) to think there is merit in playing music incompetently in public. Meritorious or not, this is exactly what our national orchestras have been doing up and down the country, with a few notable exceptions, during the past ten years and it is now a great pleasure to be able to record that one of these at least has seen the error of its former ways.

The three concerts here noticed were all conducted by the orchestra's semi-permanent conductor, Eduard van Beinum, who is to divide his time between London and Amsterdam. There is no doubt that he has improved the rhythmic accuracy, tonal cohesion and general discipline of the players almost beyond belief and it is to be hoped that there will be no backsliding while van Beinum re-applies himself to the Concertgebouw.

The first two programmes were devoted to Beethoven and included a particularly well-proportioned and perceptive interpretation of the *Eroica*, and a finely drawn version of the violin Concerto in which we admired the superb musicianship of Gioconda de Vito and the care which van Beinum gave to the provision of an accurate and sympathetic accompaniment.

The principal work of the remaining concert was Bruckner's third Symphony in D minor. The players showed an unmistakable, if surprising, liking for the music and gave a performance which reflected great credit on all concerned; the brass in particular achieved a high degree of accuracy and control, though the horns are still liable occasionally to play variants of their own devising.

There is still room for considerable improvement in the quality of tone produced by the violins, in the general reliability of the woodwind and horns, and in the accuracy of the wind *ensemble*. No doubt in time all these will accrue.

#### HALLE ORCHESTRA

##### 4th March

A SUPERB performance of Vaughan Williams' sixth Symphony lifted this concert out of the rut: Barbirolli brought to this music the fire and intensity of sheer personal conviction and he put it across with all the assurance of the born artist-showman; but the rest of the programme was played in a manner as drab and undistinguished as the days in which we live. In the *Rosamunde* overture the strings were furry-edged, completely blunting the point of the work; the *Swan* in the Royal Albert Hall asks too much of any cor anglais player, and Beethoven's seventh Symphony sounded as though Barbirolli was bored with it. This was a steady reading, rather lacking in contrasts, with no real highlights and nothing to make the heart miss a beat. Not even Beethoven can stand such treatment without sounding dull, and dull this certainly was.

#### IRMGARD SEEFRIED

##### 6th March

IRMGARD SEEFRIED gave a recital of Schubert, Moussorgsky and Wolf with Gerald Moore at the Wigmore Hall on 6th March. A full house was privileged to listen to singing of a kind not often practised in this country. Without ever overstepping the bounds of legitimate musical expression, Miss Seefried infused each song with its appropriate character, emotion or atmosphere and achieved a remarkable synthesis of the vocal and histrionic arts. Gerald Moore contributed his usual blend of musicianship, manual dexterity and tact to what can fairly be described as one of the outstanding successes of the year. The printed programme reached a new low in the matter of errors and omissions.

#### NEW ERA CONCERT

##### 25th March

RICHARD AUSTIN conducted the Philharmonia in Tippett's Concerto for double string orchestra, Falla's *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* (with Gonzalo Soriano) and Brahms' Requiem (with Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Hans Hotter and the Alexandra Choir). The



programme lasted 2½ hours which would have been too long even if the performances had been good. But even the most gluttonous Promenader must have found two hours of boredom a high price to pay for the one first-class experience of the evening—Elisabeth Schwarzkopf's fine singing of *Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit*. Otherwise this was the worst performance of the Requiem we can remember: Mr. Austin is inclined to wave non-committally at his singers and players when the one thing they are waiting for is a clear beat, while at other times he cuts the air all too furiously and commands correspondingly little attention. Rhythm was slack, intonation uncertain and at times rank bad, and the leader (Leonard Hirsch) was apt to waste so much energy "vibrating" his left hand that it was almost impossible to decide what note he was trying to play. In fact, as Beecham is reputed to have said of a famous oboe's (tuning) A, "There you are, gentlemen, take your choice". Hotter must have been unnerved either by the vagaries of the performance or by the cavernous interior of the Albert Hall or both, for he forced his voice unmercifully to produce a slow, heavy vibrato which was most unpleasing. That Falla's little jewel lacked lustre was not Soriano's fault but may be attributed to the generally tentative orchestral playing. Altogether a most depressing evening.

G. N. S.

## Book Review

*An Anthology of Musical Criticism from the Fifteenth to the Twentieth Century.* By Norman Demuth. Pp. 392. (Eyre & Spottiswoode.) 1948. 12s. 6d.

This is an interesting and entertaining book, the compilation of which has obviously involved a great amount of reading and research. The contents are extremely varied, and quite rightly include much from the works of eminent men of letters who were interested in music. Many of these are delightful, such as Steele's orchestral "Who's Who", and the opinions of such writers as Samuel Butler and Edward Fitzgerald are obviously of great interest. But it may be questioned whether the percentage of excerpts from the *Spectator*, *Tatler*, and the diaries of Pepys and Evelyn is not unduly high. In the choice of composers there is also a certain lack of sense of proportion; there are several passages devoted to Cipriani Potter, but no mention of either of the Scarlattis, or Fauré, or Franck, or Bruckner, or any Russian composer except Tchaikovsky and Stravinsky.

There are also signs of haste; some words are obviously missing from a sentence in Eric Blom's discussion of Elgar, a passage purporting to describe Mendelssohn's piano Concerto in G minor is clearly concerned with another work as the Concerto in G minor does not end quietly, and there are misprints. But the diversity of opinion expressed in the criticisms is stimulating and includes some pleasing curiosities, such as the description of the first movement and finale of Beethoven's seventh Symphony as "full of asperities and almost unbearably whimsical" and the application of the word "Rabelaisian" to the music of Bach. It was perhaps right that Samuel Butler's glowing eulogies of Handel should be balanced by Ernest Walker's over-severe judgment. On the other hand, Debussy might have been allowed something more substantial than either Mrs. Franz Liebich's vague panegyric or the very grudging tribute from Cecil Gray's *Survey of Contemporary Music*. The excerpts from the writings of Parry, though often marred by his puritanical attitude to opera and to music of Latin extraction, are always of interest. Of the younger contributors, Sir George Dyson on Delius, A. K. Holland on Elgar, Cecil Gray on Bartók and Constant Lambert on Tchaikovsky all show great shrewdness and sympathy. And when turning to the passages from Burney and other writers of his time, it is interesting to see how much easier it was for them to appreciate most contemporary developments than to make a sympathetic approach to the music of the past—a curious reversal of the prevailing attitude of to-day.

P. F. R.

## Film Music

### VAUGHAN WILLIAMS' "SCOTT OF THE ANTARCTIC"

Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Muir Mathieson.

Recorded by Arthur Bradburn.

THIS noble and, in parts, grandiose score is far better than Vaughan Williams' *The Loves of Joanna Godden* (1947), and immeasurably better than the present film itself; each of the more important sections will repay detailed study. Nevertheless, the music disappoints as a whole, not because it doesn't make one, but rather because it makes too much of one. The over-economy and (to borrow a psychoanalytic term) "repetition-compulsion" of the thematic material harm not only the form of the score itself—you can't have a highly organized unity without having enough to unite—but also its filmic function; considered, that is, in its entirety, the music tends to interpret monotony by monotony. The picture certainly presents a special problem, for its emotional range is narrow, particularly from the point where the expedition leaves Cape Evans, and of course still more so from the beginning of the homeward journey from the South Pole. At the former juncture, Vaughan Williams seizes his last opportunity for expressing brighter emotions, but while it is true that one cannot be profound without communicating sadness, the happy D major piece at this crucial point is too shallow; nor, for instance, is the earlier penguin music sufficiently substantial. Which is to say that the contrast in musical importance between the tragic and the non-tragic pieces is so great that the affective contrast between them does not get much chance of manifesting itself. In art it is impossible to contrast the negligible with the significant, for the plain reason that the negligible is not art. And in regard to this sound-track's central problem, *i.e.* the avoidance of monotony within the tragic aspect of the film, I submit that music can express and define a greater variety of what, extrinsically, seem unvaried emotions than any other form of communication (with the possible exception of the intercommunications between lovers). Vaughan Williams has not, then, fully availed himself of these unique possibilities in his medium. In fact, while he is far-sighted enough to look upon film composing as an art, it was possibly his very sense of musical responsibility which has in this case misled him. Anxious, perhaps, completely to avoid the usual patchwork and to present the score as a strongly integrated whole, he committed errors which in a lesser man might have been the lesser of alternative evils, but which, with him, have no such vicious virtues to recommend them. To pick out one instance, I think it was a grave fault to have, in this particular film, a strongly thematic title music, magnificent as the piece is when one first hears it, both in itself and in relation to the theme of the film. But when the overture reappears (in its original keys, too!) during the last stage of the journey up the glacier, it weakens its own effect as well as that of its musical surroundings. A weaker composer would probably not have achieved unity without starting off with functional tunes, but from Vaughan Williams one may expect the creation of a deeper unity within a more extended emotional and thematic orbit. I should even go further and say that any film with a single, simple, and strong theme should be kept free as far as possible from (motto-)thematicism and Leitmotivations. In the present instance, the lavish ostinato treatment, too, would seem to form an all too similar motion to the childish, obsessional, and—to say the least—inconsiderate obstinacy that underlies Scott's indisputable heroism. It is possible that another hearing or an inspection of the score will change my opinion, but I rather suspect that while my admiration for the way in which individual sections are handled will increase, so will my objections to the total structure. For the rest, even those who are interested in Vaughan Williams rather than in film music should acquaint themselves with this score, not only because of its intrinsic musical merits, but also in view of its striking relations to the first and second movements of his E minor Symphony.

H. K.

## Book Reviews

*The Waltz.* By Mosco Carner. Pp. 72. (Parrish.) 1948. 6s.

*German Song.* By Elisabeth Schumann. Pp. 72. (Parrish.) 1948. 6s.

These two books are both attractively presented and pleasant to read. Elisabeth Schumann has had the harder task, as "German Song" includes so much music of the highest value that it is impossible to deal fully with it in so small a space. She writes, however, with knowledge and enthusiasm, sometimes expressing unexpected opinions, such as her preference of Schumann's *Frauen-Liebe und Leben* to the *Dichterliebe* and the statement that Wolf's settings of Mörike are his finest songs. The final chapter discusses the interpretation of two very familiar songs. Mosco Carner, in his history of the Waltz, gives a learned, discriminating and appreciative survey of an unpretentious but thoroughly enjoyable by-path of music.

P. F. R.

*Chopin-Elegie: Aus Briefen und Schriften.* Willi Reich. (Werner Classen Verlag Zürich.) 1948.

The compiler of these 91 pages adopts the same method as in his life-stories of Beethoven and Wolf, published by the same firm, and that of Wagner (Otto Walter). This is a useful manual to keep alongside of Arthur Hedley's *Chopin*. The composer is "put across" by his own statements and contemporary criticism. An appendix gives extracts (in German) from Chopin's fragmentary piano-method and the reminiscences of a Viennese pianist, Friederike Streiche-Müller.

### KILLED THE WALLOON

*César Franck.* By Norman Demuth. Pp. 228. (Dobson.) 1949. 12s. 6d.

I am not competent to review this work and do so with considerable hesitancy. Appreciation of Franck's music (the anecdote is, I hope, not wholly irrelevant) was early darkened for me by a public-school happening. A certain forward musical boy used to practise the violin Sonata greatly to the annoyance of his neighbour, a pugnacious Philistine, justifying his preference by the statement, pronounced with indescribable juvenile hauteur, "He was a Walloon composer". Opportunities for reprisals being limited, the outraged auditor used on the football field to make unnecessary violent rushes against his persecutor, sending him sprawling in the mud each time, and shouting as he did so "Killed the Walloon". I thought this rather hard at the time; I was reminded of it by looking for d'Indy's book on Franck at the Holborn Public Library and finding only the violin Sonata available; but years persuade me that it may, like Ben Jonson's *sufflaminandus* of Shakespeare, contain a grain of salutary truth.

Mr. Demuth's book, consisting of 43 pages on the life, 16 on the general characteristics of the music, 153 of detailed musical criticism and analysis, list of works, bibliography and index, is a thoroughly workmanlike affair. He announces the discovery of Franck's son's wedding certificate at Greenwich, examines the setting of Victor Hugo's *Patria*, and the early opera *Stradella*, ignored by d'Indy; he has consulted MM. de Bréville and Ropartz, the composer's only surviving pupils, and Sir Adrian Boult, apropos of Pierné's rendering of the Symphony; he distinguishes with real critical zeal, lamenting the church solos and many of the choral works, and he frankly admits that Franck was not at home dramatically and could not express evil. He knows so much more about Franck than I, for one, do that I am neither qualified nor disposed to take him to task for anything he says about the idol he worships with so much discretion, this parentally suppressed and entirely humourless organist from Liège round whom has gathered the mysticity of a Victorian J. S. Bach with the Schola Cantorum to perpetuate his double

counterpoint. All that I would contest is that in the argument about cyclic form Beethoven's contribution is handled disingenuously:

"The fact that Beethoven introduced a few bars of the scherzo into the finale of the fifth Symphony and the themes of the ninth Symphony in its finale does not really entitle us to consider the works as 'cyclic', although it is an obvious way of binding everything together."

But, quite apart from the instance given, the opening theme of the C minor Symphony is suggested, not of course by direct quotation, in each of its movements and even in so unobtrusive a place as the close of the first part of the trio, until its final metamorphosis in the subsidiary theme so extensively worked in the development section of the triumphant finale. Charles Wood's observations on the part played by the opening subject of the *Eroica* in all its movements (Grove, *Beethoven and his Nine Symphonies*, pp. 94, 95) are also in point. I see nothing to add to M. Ropartz' suggestion that Franck "took as his point of departure certain works of Beethoven with which he was fundamentally acquainted", and I cannot feel that he extended—no, he restricted rather—what he found. Still, by citing Franck's pupil, Mr. Demuth gives us the opportunity of forming a judgment, though I wish he had also cited d'Indy's picture of the composer intoxicating himself at the piano "in a jerky and continually increasing fortissimo" with "the overture to the *Meistersinger* or something by Bach, Beethoven or Schumann", before finding his idea, which Cecil Gray considers so illuminating in his account of Franck under "Miscellaneous Schools: Nineteenth Century" in *The History of Music*. There are two references to Mr. Gray in Mr. Demuth's book, which leaves a reader with a desire to hear *Les Eolides*, if not *Psyché*. As it is, the picture of the precocious young musician anxious to conciliate his teachers in the early stages, never showing resentment, a model teacher and husband, not forcing himself to honours but waiting patiently till they came to him, and killing the Walloon (note, please, my "cyclic form") by becoming a naturalized Frenchman in 1873 has a fine Smilesian moral. But, alas, there was no demon in this artist. This is the first work on him by an English author; may it be long before there is another! If, of the two eminent musicians to whom Liège gave birth, Grétry was as superficial as the organist of St. Clothilde was profound, at least both had one point in common: they were bores.\* This is not to depreciate Mr. Demuth's honest endeavours. He is to be thanked not only for what he tells us about Franck's own music, but for what he tells us about Reicha, whose *Traité de Mélodie* (1814) with its instructions how to make "développements des membres et des dessins pris du thème" might also have been mentioned, and for what he tells us about Franck's contemporaries, especially the anecdotes of Debussy and Saint-Saëns, though I wish he would not call Gounod's opera *La Nonne Sanglantée* in two places, one being the index, and *The Bloody Nun* in another.

*Music and Literature, a Comparison of the Arts.* By Calvin S. Brown. Pp. 287. (University of Georgia Press.) 1948. \$4.50.

These 22 not uninteresting chapters are in the nature of a discussion talk on four interrelated questions on which information is scattered, undeveloped, and not readily accessible: namely, the elements that music and literature have in common, their collaboration in vocal music, the structural principles of both arts, together with the attempts of writers to model their work on musical compositions, and the converse problem of the effect of literature on music, programme music in particular. Its most valuable pages are those pointing out the relation between de Quincey's *Dream-Fugue* and an actual fugue. It suffers from the writer's superficial knowledge of rhythmical matters, that allows him to say "the attempts to analyze prose rhythms and reduce them to certain identifiable patterns are as unconvincing as they are laborious"—has he never heard of the *cursus* or looked at Saintsbury's *History of English Prose Rhythm*?—and his disproportionate attention to trivialities—who wants to know that Rachel Field wrote a text for

\* Of the 163 musical examples from Franck's works printed in the text only 44 are in flat keys.

Schubert's *Ave Maria* in Walt Disney's *Fantasia*, for example? He gives us grounds for believing that literature tends to abandon the representational for the abstract and music the abstract for the representational, at least since Wagner, and he offers a solid account of *Leitmotiv*, stressing its literary antecedents, going even so far as to define it (p. 94) as essentially a literary (or verbal) device adapted to the needs of music. He makes the shrewd remark that possibly no writer of the first rank has concerned himself with writing a literary work in strict sonata form, and certainly the extracts he quotes from such American poets as J. G. Fletcher and Conrad Aiken (a whole chapter devoted to the latter) show no very great attention to the intricacies of form and metre, unless repetition be accounted such. He does not seem to realize that in the regular ode with strophe, antistrophe and epode (e.g. Shelley's *Ode to Naples*) the English metrical armoury possesses an instrument analogous, at least, to the big guns of music, sonata and rondo form, where themes are contrasted and patterns recur, and that it is possible to adapt these perquisites of the ode to something very like music, though, as he notes, *simultaneity* is impossible in the poet's case. Such poems as *Alexander's Feast* and Collins' *The Passions*, with its musical instruments interlocked between the opening and closing octosyllabic sections, should have shown what can be done in this way without one art treading on the other's corns. He does not instance them. His work seems to have been done some time ago, for there are only two mentions of Eliot, one in a quotation from Aiken's prose, and none to those misnomers, the *Quartets*. But then there is no mention of Hopkins, whose "hangers" or "outrides" involve differences in speed and might be compared to Chopin's irregular groupings of notes in sevens and thirteens. Nor, in the chapter on variations, does J. A. Symonds, who, so far as I know, introduced the variation form into English verse, find a place; it is only by considerable latitude that *The Ring and the Book* can be regarded as a literary example of that form. Familiarity with T. E. Brown or O'Shaughnessy or the Tchaikovsky-ridden Edmund John is not perhaps to be expected, but the attribution of *Love in a Valley* to William Morris (p. 27) makes one pause, especially as *Tardy Spring* is correctly assigned to Meredith on p. 139. Mr. Calvin Brown is happier in his sections on the symphonic poem and programme music, though even here he does not think very deeply. He deplores the birds in the second movement of the *Pastoral* Symphony, while aware of the thematic material that unites them, not apparently seeing that the passage, standing where it does, is in the nature of a cadenza, as in a concerto, an idea adumbrated on the return of the first subject in the first movement, and that one of the birds, the cuckoo, we have already heard in the first movement. Nor, in calling the first figure of the *Hebrides* Overture a "wave-figure" does he note its derivation from the development section of the *Pastoral's* first movement, though registering, with Grove's help, the endless repetition of nature in both works. He is more at home with intelligence tests of infantile listeners to *Le Carnaval des Animaux*. But his book was worth writing as an introduction to clearer thinking on the interaction of the sister arts of Music and Poetry.

E. H. W. M.

*The Concerto.* By Abraham Veinus. Pp. 330. (Cassell.) 1948. 16s.

This is an admirable book. The scholarship is sound and the style refreshingly simple and direct, if sometimes a little immature in more colourful passages. A good example of this latter is the author's description of "the line of descent from Viadana to Schönberg" as "the furthest distance and most devious direction between two points". However, his book does in fact span the years between those two composers in a treatment, which, whilst generally uncritical, is accurately and lavishly informative.

Starting with the *madrigali* of Monteverdi and the double-chorus *concerti* of the Gabrieli and Banchieri, the author traces the developing concerto principle with a sure and steady hand. When we reach Mozart the best is to come and Mr. Veinus' long section on the greatest creator of concertos is in itself a considerable addition to Mozart literature. Throughout the rest of his book we have an occasional quarrel with him, and the nearer



our own times he takes us, the more frequent these become. Thus, Busoni's great Concerto is dismissed in a three line footnote, the treatment of Elgar's work is uninformed and that of Delius' flippant. The Bliss piano Concerto, for example, is not mentioned at all whereas a concerto grosso by one Robert Russell Bennett for dance band and Symphony Orchestra gets detailed consideration. Points like these must be assumed to arise from lack of occasion on Mr. Veinus' part, as often on our own, to hear great modern works, and his opportunities, unshared by us, to hear poor American ones. The scope of the book is such, in any case, as to reveal him not only as a classical scholar, but one whose essentially musical interests are predominantly oriented away from the post-Brahms era.

He poses some pertinent questions: for example, why are the concertos of C. P. E. Bach never played? Mr. Veinus recognizes, in particular, the great D minor Concerto as one of the important, and beautiful, monuments of concerto form. Why, indeed?

The book is beautifully printed on good paper. There are a few misprints in the body of the text and a great many mis-spellings in the bibliography, in which Mr. Veinus, an American, was helped by an English organization that should surely have known better.

J. B.

*Harpsichord Music.* By Max Kenyon. Pp. 256. (Cassell.) 1949. 18s.

During the last ten or fifteen years, the harpsichord like many other old instruments has become alarmingly fashionable. The nineteenth-century musician modernized old music out of all recognition; the mid-twentieth-century one is proud of his "authentic" approach, using recorders and bass-voils to play parts originally written for them and restoring the very necessary harpsichord to baroque chamber- and orchestral music. Excellent though all these intentions are, the results are often quite disastrous. Finding that the viol is in much demand, a cellist buys an old, inadequately restored eighteenth-century viol and plays it like a cello, without frets and bowed overhand; the result is a "cellamba". The balance between strings and recorders is destroyed by the vastly increased power and technical resource of the modern violin with its raised bridge, steel E-string, Tourte bow and chin-rest. And the happy pianist, convinced that all keyboard instruments with strings can be played in the same way, sits at a harpsichord and plays it like a Blüthner.

One way of improving this not ideal state of affairs is to carry the general musician's education a stage further by providing him with readable and scholarly histories. Mr. Kenyon's new book is addressed to the amateur pianist and the intelligent listener. It is designed as a survey of the music for spinet, virginals and harpsichord (and clavichord, though neither front dust-jacket nor title-page mentions it), laid out nation by nation and set against the social background of the period in which it was written.

Of the readability of the resulting book there can be no doubt. It is laid out in an orderly way and prettily printed (though there is no point in using typographic ornaments unless they are neat and clear as well as ornamental; too many in this book are neither) and Mr. Kenyon has an easy, flowing style. Many of his comments are new and penetrating: "Sonata texture is the great thing about the sonata. . . . The Suite is, within each movement, homogeneous: the Sonata, heterogeneous"; "Haydn, as far as his clavichord music is concerned, is young, passionate, revolutionary. . . . Do not approach him backwards from Beethoven, approach him forwards from C. P. E. Bach"; "[C. P. E. Bach's] *Versuch* can only be applied to his own music and not to that of others"; "sonata form and sonata style were born with the clavichord and graduated to the pianoforte"; "[the Alberti bass] is the true type of accompaniment when a composer wishes to treat the keyboard instrument as a homophonic singing instrument". The historical sketches at the beginning of each chapter are admirable. So are many of his general surveys and his advice on ornaments.

Not all the book is on this level, unfortunately, and it is slipshod in detail. The author is very confused and confusing about many features of the mechanism of virginals, regals, clavichord and harpsichord. Modern clavichords commonly have two strings to



a note, not one. Frescobaldi's partitas are divisions on a ground, not suites. Shakespeare's lines on a lady at a virginals<sup>1</sup> are criticized as though they described virginals *playing* whereas they actually give an exact description of *tuning*. And the quotation is further marred by three of the quite astonishing number of misprints and spelling mistakes with which the book is littered. I have so far found sixty-seven in the indexes alone; among the names given in the "index of composers" are Beaumarchais, Thomas Busby, Harriet Cohen, Salomon and Lucille Wallace! A number of the musical examples are inaccurate. Nothing is said of the extensive literature of chamber-music including the harpsichord written by composers of the French school—Rameau, Couperin and Mondonville for instance—or of the harpsichord music of the earlier northern composers like Schmid, Sweelinck (indexed as "Swelling"! ) and Scheidt. And phrases like "In the case of the flugel [*sic*] there is extra fog" or "If knocked by a felt-covered hammer head you are, of course, in the presence of a pianoforte" should not be left around for a reviewer to pounce on. Fog-filled flügels and combative pianos are a horrid thought.

Mr. Kenyon and his publishers have seriously diminished the value of an attractive and promising book by letting through too many slips of this kind.

*Concerning Handel.* By William C. Smith. Pp. viii + 299. (Cassell.) 1949. 21s.

Mr. Smith's new book, the result of many years' research into Handel, is a collection of eight rather specialized studies concerning particular aspects of his life and work. "Three of the essays are entirely new, one is a very much enlarged edition of an earlier version, and the remaining four that have appeared elsewhere are presented here revised in accordance with the most recent research on the subject".

Here is much new and valuable material on Handel's financial affairs, on the authenticity and dating of the various Handel portraits, on the singer, Gustavus Waltz, who some say was Handel's cook. The definitive chronology of the early editions of *Messiah* and the *Water Music* is established, and eighteenth-century performances and editions of *Acis and Galatea* listed and considered in detail. The book's documentation is accurate and extensive; its format and printing are elegant.

But it is not easy reading. Mr. Smith's style seems severe and aloof. He scorns footnotes, uses few abbreviations and sets out in full bibliographical and chronological information which could be given more intelligibly in a table or an appendix. In some essays the sheer bulk of material quite overwhelms one and the really important facts cannot very readily be picked out. Some pruning, and the enlightened use of musicological apparatus, would have made this book even more useful. Nevertheless, future Handel studies must take it into account, and the Handelian will find much to interest him.

T. D.

#### DEUX "PETITS MAÎTRES"

*Grieg—a Symposium.* Edited by Gerald Abraham. Pp. 144 + 40. (Lindsay Drummond.) 1948. 10s. 6d.

*Erik Satie.* By Rollo H. Myers. Pp. 150. (Dobson.) 1948. 8s. 6d.

This is the fourth volume in the welcome series "Music of the Masters", excellently edited and superbly organized by Gerald Abraham. The peculiar methods of ingeniously synchronised co-operation by several experts, all likewise stimulated and co-ordinated into a singular effort of scholarly teamwork by means of the encyclopedic omniscience of their chief editor, have hitherto yielded remarkably good results, especially in the closer investigation of rarely trodden bypaths among the works of prolific composers like Schubert and Tchaikovsky. It may have seemed arguable whether this method of fan-like spreading analysis would do so well in the case of a composer whose slender output

<sup>1</sup> . . . when thou gently sway'st  
The wiry concord that mine ear confounds,  
Do I envy those jacks that nimble leap  
To kiss the tender inward of thy hand.

alone relegates him to the "dii minores gentium". The result, however, completely justifies Abraham's method even in the extreme case of Edvard Grieg.

I have always suspected Grieg's popularity to be in exactly inverted proportion to his actual achievement. After having perused Abraham's comprehensive volume, I know: this book tells the story of an undeniable artistic fiasco. By shedding fresh light on every nook and corner of Grieg's artistic development it reveals unmercifully the psychological premises for his ultimate failure. Grieg, who died in his 65th year in 1907, lived twice as long as Schubert. Yet he wrote in all that time hardly more than a mere half-dozen works of sonata proportions. The one best known and most significant, the piano Concerto, op. 16, remained subject to constant orchestral revisions up to the year of the composer's death and was finally issued with all the structural puerilities of its creator's youth. One need only compare this fruitless struggle, extending over 40 years, with the startling results obtained when real masters of their craft like Verdi (*Boccanegra*, 1885) and Brahms (Trio, B major, op. 8, 1890) devote their mature powers to the revision of works of their raw youth. All Grieg's later efforts to achieve something outside the sphere of musical miniature were doomed to failure. The records of his later years are filled to the brim with names of planned and abandoned chamber music, operas, and incidental music to plays. There can be no more relevant indictment of a composer's method than the sombre list of fragments and abandoned compositions enumerated by the impartial investigation of Gerald Abraham and his team. But the depressing, if necessary and ultimately salutary work of exploding the myth of Grieg's "genius" goes even further. For the first time we are given actual proof (especially in Abraham's chapter on the "Piano Concerto" and in John Horton's essay on "Personality and style") that as a melodist Grieg drew heavily on the native treasure store of Ludwig Matthis Lindemann's (1812-1887) *Fjeldmelodier* (a collection of 540 folk-tunes and dances, already ingeniously harmonized and published as early as 1841, i.e. two years before Grieg's birth). It becomes no less evident from the results of their investigation that Grieg and Richard Nordraak were not the first to incorporate Norwegian folklore into their music, but that this honour goes to Halvdar Kjerulf (1815-1868), Grieg's forerunner even in his most undisputed domain of modern Norwegian song. Grieg's later efforts to write Norway's national opera came to naught. The same lack of structural power, which drove him so early into the realm of musical miniature and which is in the last responsible for the neglect into which the string Quartet and the violin sonatas have recently fallen, turned the operatic plan of *Sigurd Jorsalfar* into fragments of incidental music and secured for the dramatically inflated miniaturist sketches of the *Peer Gynt* music an undisputable world success. Only as a composer of Norwegian song and as a folk-inspired follower of Schumann's *Klavierstück* did Grieg achieve maturity and some degree of mastery. The story of his lifelong efforts to become independent of the overpowering teutonic influence of Schumann and Wagner at least in those modest fields, is attractively related by Kathleen Dale and Astra Desmond, whereas Hubert Foss, Alan Frank and Edmund Rubbra investigate the bulk of instrumental and choral works, as far as these have not been dealt with by Gerald Abraham and John Horton in their truly dominating essays. The paucity of these large-scale works as well as the fact that they are often thematically interrelated results in some unavoidable overlapping in an otherwise perfectly balanced volume. The only unsatisfactory contribution comes from a Norwegian. Gerik Schjelderup's "Grieg the Man" is even worse than the typical biographical "fable convenue" of Nietzsche's sardonic remark. It is far too conventional for so unconventional a personality as Grieg and its obvious reticence about Grieg's idiosyncrasies is certainly not justified more than 40 years after the composer's death. That Grieg's life story is necessary for a deeper understanding of his failure as an artist has been relevantly proved by Monrad-Johansen's recent Biography (1934; Engl. transl. 1938). Even in a book admittedly devoted more to the works than to the life of a composer, the mentioning of some artistically important events and some more precise dates would have helped to a better appreciation of the work as such. The data of the chronological appendix (p. 129 *et passim*) are not always helpful in that connection. Under these circumstances John

Horton's lucid exposition of the artistic and personal relations between Grieg and Norway's two greatest dramatists—Ibsen and Bjoernson—is all the more welcome. Grieg's uncontested ingenuity in discovering fresh and attractive harmonic bypaths could perhaps have been focused in a separate chapter, which might have usefully epitomized the findings of Ernst Kurth (*Romantische Harmonik*, 1920, and K. v. Fischer, 1938). But these are trifling shortcomings in a work replete with new and enlightening information. The comprehensive and well organized bibliography and chronology as well as the copious array of musical quotations add much to the value of the book.

Eric Satie may well become the delight of future musicographers, once "Modern Music" and all it entails have sunk into the usual limbo of semi-oblivion, enveloping inexorably any closed chapter in the history of this art. He belongs to the species of inspired forerunners of a new art conception, recalling Vincenzo Galilei's and Adriano Banchieri's spade work for the ensuing epoch of "Basso Continuo" as well as C. P. E. Bach's early anticipation of classical sonata technique. Satie has quite consciously anticipated every single artistic movement of the last 60 years. He established the harmonic foundations of French Impressionism with his sequences of unrelated chords of the ninth of his early *Sarabandes* (1887), although Chabrier (in the same year) and Moussorgsky (in his *Il vecchio castello* of 1874) may have arrived even earlier at similar results. In his *Gymnopédies* (1888) Satie already foreshadowed certain "linear" elements of Neo-Classicism. In his early stageworks and ballets he championed Dadaism and Cubism long before they had become "legal tender". In his equally early *Dances Gothiques* and *Gnossiennes*, with their unbarred notation long before Ferruccio Busoni, the Neo-Gothicism of Charles Koechlin and the Neo-Classicism of Stravinsky's second period are decidedly anticipated. In addition to these achievements Satie belongs to the earliest contributors to experimental music for the screen with his *Entr'acte Symphonique* "Cinema", the curtain-raiser in his last work for the stage, the surrealist ballet *Relache* (1924), thereby preceding Milhaud's attempt to fuse opera and film technique in his *Christof Colomb* (1930) by six years. The liturgical monotony of his *Drame Symphonique Socrate* may have been responsible for certain declamatory features of Hindemith's and Kurt Weill's *Gebrauchsmusik*. Satie even had the pluck to compose a Maeterlinck libretto before Debussy embarked on the revolutionary score of his *Pelléas*. But here is where Satie's personal tragedy comes in. Like Banchieri, who similarly anticipated in turn Viadana, Orazio Vecchi and Monteverdi, he was destined to live permanently in the shadow of a greater composer, whose genius was able to shape his own dim visions into durable works of art. Satie abandoned his own plan for a *Princesse Maleine* in favour of Debussy's masterpiece and in despair he turned away from "Impressionism" and neo-gothic Mysticism to the pastiche technique of his early surrealist ballets. But here again he was soon overshadowed, first by Stravinsky, and later by his own disciples Milhaud, Auric and Poulenc. The grotesquely wide ambit of Satie's creative life emerges from the fact that he started as a Rosicrucian disciple of Sar Peladan and ended as the composer of the Ballet Instantaneiste *Relache*, after having achieved a short spell of notoriety bordering on success with his highly original interpretation of Platonic dialogues (*Socrate*, 1919) and with the Ballet Realiste *Parade* (1917), from which Stravinsky (*Piano Rag Music*), Varese and George Antheil (*Ballet Mechanique*) certainly did receive formative impressions. With Satie the mask of peripatetic jester and philosophizing clown served obviously as a protective screen for the extreme sensitivity of an artist never quite sure of himself and conscious of his limitations. When the mask was lifted, as in the last epistolary outburst addressed to the dying Debussy, it uncovered a heart lacerated by the bitternesses of a whole frustrated life. Satie's habitual buffooneries, culminating in the grotesque running commentaries to his music, but just as unmistakably expressed in the whimsical musical spelling of his manuscripts as well as in his highly diverting autobiographical writings, should not cloud the vista of a composer, at once diffident and sincere, boldly experimental and irresponsible, but in the last resort deeply characteristic of his epoch for the detached onlooker of a later age.

Rollo H. Myers' book, published as a volume of the series "Contemporary composers", edited by Scott Goddard, is written with zest, understanding and sympathy. The author certainly knows how to combine a very amusing life story with a scholarly and lucidly formulated appraisal of Satie's erratic yet momentous musical output. Together with Wilfrid Mellers' brilliant essay (first published in *Music and Letters*, 1942, and now forming part of his *Studies in Contemporary Music*, 1947) it gives a complete and comprehensive as well as unbiased picture of modern music's enigmatic and semi-obscure prophet. It is all the more welcome as it fills a noticeable gap in modern English musicography. With the help of some facsimiles of Satie's most scurrilous piano compositions, through copious quotations of his rather inaccessible music and finally through very amusing illustrations (among them Picasso's stirring designs for the ballet *Mercur*e and Cocteau's witty sketch of the composer during his brief spell of Parisian fame) the Man and his Music become strangely alive. Very readable English translations of Satie's autobiographical effusions and of his early polemical tussles with anti-Wagnerian reviewers, and a comprehensive list of the compositions and their few recordings will prove invaluable to the student of the "Music of yesterday".

H. F. R.

*Bizet*. By Winton Dean. Pp. 262. (Dent: "Master Musicians" Series.) 1948. 7s. 6d.

Winton Dean writes in a pleasing and lucid style, without affectation, and succeeds in creating an attractive and convincing impression of a man whose early death cut off one of music's most naturally gifted artists. Many readers will be surprised by the extent and scope of Bizet's output (which includes 27 operas), most of which seems to be generally unknown. All the more important works are straightforwardly discussed and there is a good index and a series of appendices, including the calendar of dates that is so useful in this series and an article that Bizet wrote in 1867. This last was on the occasion of his becoming music critic to *La Revue Nationale et Etrangère*, and it is his manifesto, engagingly and refreshingly expressed. This is one of the best issues in the series.

R. S.

*Music for the Man Who Enjoys "Hamlet"*. By B. H. Haggin. Pp. 127 + ii. (Dennis Dobson.) 1947. 8s. 6d.

A dangerously intelligent attempt to explain music to the unmusical. It will make the man who does not live in music believe that he knows what he is talking about.

*César Franck*. By John Horton. Pp. 66. (Oxford University Press.) 1948.

Factually impeccable, this booklet achieves its aim without difficulty, despite some questionable theorizing and a few terminological, stylistic, and even grammatical deficiencies.

*The Rape of Lucretia*. A Symposium by Benjamin Britten, Ronald Duncan, Eric Crozier, John Piper, Henry Boys. Pp. 101. (John Lane, The Bodley Head.) 1948. 25s.

*The Marriage of Figaro*. Sadler's Wells Opera Book. By Scott Goddard, Eric Blom, Thomas Walton. Pp. 48. (John Lane, The Bodley Head.) 1948. 2s. 6d.

*The Mastersingers*. Covent Garden Operas. By Egon Wellesz. Pp. 31. (Boosey & Hawkes.) 1948. 2s. 6d.

Boys' and Blom's analyses are very good to excellent as far as they go, though they do not go quite as far as they want to. You cannot, for instance, explain the tonal scheme of the original version of *Lucretia's* motto tune thus: "... its tonal ambiguity is only apparent, for the cadence patently declares the pedal as tonic of the mixolydian mode on the dominant of the key of the Act (C minor)". The untransposed mixolydian mode at the end does not make the whole tune unambiguous. The relation of this theme to the *ostinato* of the funeral march should have been shown, as also that of the *Lucretia* motif to the *Tarquinius* motif and to the figured chorale. Indeed, the *leitmotiv* aspect of the

opera is not made sufficiently clear. Not that you have to point to a *Leitmotiv* wherever it occurs, but rather wherever it may not seem to, yet very significantly does so. For example, very few listeners will, without the analyst's help, discover the exact major version (exceptional *qua* major version) of the Lucretia motif in the accompaniment of Bianca's aria of remembrance. Yet without identifying the motif here one cannot wholly understand the aria. And since the identical musical expression of opposite extra-musical ideas is pointed out in Collatinus' first Act aria ("Their love is only joy!" and "Their love is all despair!"), the similar case of Tarquinius' "Wake up Lucretia!" which reverts to the preceding lullaby, should also have been emphasized—not to speak of a most striking instance in *Peter Grimes* (Hut Scene).<sup>1</sup> Finally, Boys stresses the B minor of the expositive "Lucretia" toast in Act I, but does not relate it to the B minor of Lucretia's last entry and of the succeeding episode which starts with Collatinus' "Lucretia!" upon the chord of B major and the Lucretia motif in B minor; nor does he show the connection between all B minors and the Male Chorus' final, liberating move into B major at the end of the Epilogue: "For now He bears our sin and does not fall. . . ." Of the 28 music examples, some are not misprinted.

One is extremely grateful to Blom for mentioning the fascinating (for me indeed overwhelming) beginnings, in the dominant key, of the Duettino and the march, though he should perhaps have indicated the parallel instances in *Così*, as this opera is also on the Wells repertoire. His "simple explanation", however, according to which these irregularities are transitions from the recitative to the number, seems to me off the point. For the very fact that Mozart embarked on these transitions remains to be explained. Why, that is, did he choose, at one and the same time, (a) not to end the recitative in the key of the succeeding number, and (b) to let the end of the recitative overlap with the opening of the number? The answer cannot be simple, for it has to take into account all the relations between Mozart's recitatives and numbers. I hope to return to the subject. For the rest, Blom should perhaps also have mentioned that the sextet was Mozart's favourite.

Within the limits it sets itself, the Wellesz is well-nigh perfect. But since the parallel between Walter's new style and Wagner's own is shown, it might also have been said, apropos of "Verachtet mir die Meister nicht", that Sachs, too, is a projection of Wagner's own mind. In psychoanalytic nomenclature, Walter is Wagner's ego, Sachs his enlightened super-ego.

H. K.

<sup>1</sup> See my forthcoming H.M.V. analysis.

## Reviews of Music

Schubert. Pianoforte Sonata in E minor. Ed. by Kathleen Dale. (British and Continental.) 5s.

Movements I, II and III, said to have been composed in 1817, were sent to the publisher Whistling in 1842 by Ferdinand Schubert, who remarked that the finale was missing. They were not then published, but the first movement (of which the Berlin State Library held another copy in the composer's hand) was eventually printed independently in 1888 by Breitkopf and Härtel as part of their Collected Edition. In 1907 Emil Prieger, into whose possession Ferdinand's copy had come, edited for B. and H. the Allegretto (II). The scherzo and trio were not issued until 1928. The fourth movement added in this edition is not asserted confidently to be the missing finale, but is considered apt: it was first published by Diabelli about 1847 with a cut and transposed version (turned into an E major introduction) of an unattached Adagio in D flat, probably the remains of yet



another lost sonata. Thus, only (I) of this conjectural whole has been hitherto available in the "complete" edition.

It would be illuminating to see the actual MSS. that Schubert's brother sent to Whistling. Were the three movements demonstrably written out as the torso of a sonata, or did Ferdinand assemble them for Whistling's benefit? It seems hardly imaginable that Schubert intended (II) as a slow movement (or even as the sometimes-used second-movement *allegretto*) to follow (I), for it is in style and structure a typical leisurely first movement (or, less likely, finale) such as is not uncommon in his work. True, the tempo is *allegretto*, but the character is that of a gentle *allegro*: note the fact that the firmly muscular development, with its long dominant preparation for the restatement, is not in contrast with but in the manner of the rest of the piece. If this dates from 1817, it is well below Schubert's best standard at that time, for there are few subtleties and no hint of the way in which Schubert had already discovered how to turn to advantage elements that threatened to disrupt his grip. The recapitulation of the discursive second group can here offer no more than the simple attractiveness of what went before.

More reasons for reluctance to accept (II) as a genuine second movement can be found in (I), which, ending in E major, makes comparatively lame the effect of (II), which is in the same key. This is, moreover, aggravated by a structural defect in (I). In a note issued by the publishers, Professor Abraham comments on the conciseness of the first movement and marks the turn to E major at the outset of the development. In doing this Schubert gives out the cadence-phrase of the first theme of the second group:—



The E major turns out to be the dominant of A. This seems to me a mistake in so small a design, for the restatement involves exactly the same passage, which there loses its freshness. And there is no hope of saving the situation afterwards, for the recapitulation ends perfunctorily in E major and there is no coda. It may be objected that there is a world of difference between E major as a sudden gleam after G major, and E major as an established key, and that Schubert was out to demonstrate this: but the movement is on so small a scale that the appearance of E (major or minor) can be felt only as a tonic. All this militates against the success of (II) in its present position: I can scarcely believe that Schubert would seriously have juxtaposed the two pieces. The scherzo is completely delightful, the best thing in the collection, and its development produces a wonderful key-shift (through A major, the dominants of F sharp minor, A minor, B flat minor, D flat minor, and the home dominant) to the restatement in A flat. The final rondo is also charming, though not to be compared with the best youthful Schubert: like (II) it has a literal and discursive recapitulation that does not improve with repetition. In the B major exposition of the second group, there is a pleasant digression, a return of the main theme in the favourite flat sixth region, G major, soon afterwards removed by B major. The restatement is unfortunately note for note in E major, so that the digression must come in C major; the effect is substantially the same as before and it does not work twice. An alert Schubert (who had already written, for instance, the first movement of the fourth Symphony in 1816) would subtly have altered the tonal inflections the second time, freshening the reappearance while creating almost an illusion of exact transposition.

A supplement includes the D flat Adagio that was truncated by Diabelli as a prelude to (IV): both its complete and garbled forms are given. It is not important, but is fine enough to be worth an occasional performance. All Schubertians should buy this volume and decide for themselves whether the group forms a good sonata. I don't think it does, but it has some richly characteristic details. The scherzo alone is worth infinitely more than five shillings.

R. S.



## NEW ENGLISH SONG

Lennox Berkeley. *Five Songs* for medium voice. (Words by Walter de la Mare.) (J. & W. Chester.) 6s.

Alan Rawsthorne. *Carol*. (Words by W. R. Rodgers.) (Oxford University Press.) 2s. 6d.

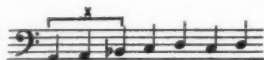
Ivor Walsworth. *Sleep on, my Love*. (Words by Henry King, 1592-1669.) (Oxford University Press.) 2s. 6d.

It is an unpleasant but undeniable fact, that modern song—after the glorious impetus of German Romanticism had spent itself in the flaccid and heavy-footed lyrics of the later Strauss and Pfitzner—has gone into partial eclipse. Any attempt, therefore, to re-establish a broken lyrical tradition out of the welter of contemporary cross-currents of style is a sure sign of moral courage. In his youngest lyrical opus Lennox Berkeley appears again as too responsible and self-reflecting an artist to take his cue solely from his early Gallic models. The cycle is significantly enough dedicated to Pierre Bernac and Francis Poulenc (Berkeley himself being something like Poulenc's "opposite number" in this country), to emphasize old loyalties and a common heritage of musical *esprit*. Yet in these songs the composer casts a strangely nostalgic glance across the fence to Central Europe. Berkeley's music—arresting and interesting even where clearly derivative—reminds one, at times vaguely, of Rudi Stephan's (1887-1915) curious blendings of Straussian post-romanticism with impressionistic pastiche technique. The integration of harmonically unrelated colour patches into a modulatory scheme of Wolf-Straussian subtlety results in a kind of neo-romanticism, which Stravinsky meant to have exorcised long ago. This new blending of older elements of style is specially noticeable in "Mistletoe", where the music evolves out of a single "one bar motif" of purely modulatory character (somewhat reminiscent of Hugo Wolf's favourite devices) and knows how to keep its balance between the opposite tonal poles of F sharp and C. "The song of the soldiers" has an eerie, dreamlike quality, enhanced by the ghostly outlines of bare two-part counterpoint between voice and piano, against a background of muffled march rhythms and—tonally unrelated—trumpet signals. Here, as well as in "Horseman", with the ostinato patter of hoofs in the accompaniment against the folk-primitivism of the vocal part, the fertilizing influence of Mahler is felt. Berkeley seems less happy in the harmonic crudities of "Poor Henry swallowing his physic with a gurgle, a gasp". The vocal line of "Silver" (a poem replete with beautiful imagery and almost self-sufficient in the magical lilt of its word-music) suffers from obvious lack of melodic inspiration. It will hardly be able to supplant Armstrong Gibbs' popular setting of these verses. Only here Berkeley relapses into the bad habits of his generation, filling the canvas of accompaniment with a pattern of undistinguished rhythmic quality and lacking in modulatory spontaneity. This last song certainly exudes "atmosphere", but the composer has amply shown that much more may be expected from him and that his ensuing maturity holds higher promise.

If the doggerel character of Walter de la Mare's verse goes a long way to simplify metrical and structural problems for his composer, the more complicated metre and rhyme scheme of W. R. Rodgers' *Carol* with its poignantly shortened refrain seems a harder nut to crack. Alan Rawsthorne (whose proven skill in miniatures for the piano may considerably facilitate his lyrical efforts) solves the problem of the shortened stanza-refrain by repetitive elongation. Hereby he is able to establish satisfactory proportions of four-bar periods; it remains arguable, however, if in this process of structural augmentation the original poetic rhythm has not been destroyed altogether. In his laudable effort to create a durable structure and to avoid impressionistic vagaries of style, Rawsthorne composes stanza 4 as an exact recapitulation of stanza 1, filling only stanzas 2 and 3 with new musical material. The four-squareness of the chief melody in B flat minor, the wistful ostinato drops in the bass and certain chromatic oddities in the contrasting middle section recall almost the manner of Pfitzner and his lesser followers. Unity of mood and

subtlety of declamation are among the strongest points in this interesting song of undecided stylistic bent.

The conjuring up of mediaeval monastic atmosphere in Ivo: Walsworth's *Sleep on, my Love* is effected by the original device of a perpetual three-part round of seven notes in the accompaniment:



To this a derivative counterpoint in the alto part of only five notes



is added, transposing motif x into the upper fifth. The voice develops on freely declamatory lines against this ostinato background of strongly modal character. The acoustic result of the three-part round with its different "sights" may be compared with the clangour of distant and muffled church bells and recalls certain features and methods of early Faburden technique. The music is most certainly based on an original structural principle, but can this artistic *tour-de-force* still be called a song? The instrumental accompaniment should be transferred to the organ, which alone could give its threefold canonic web separate and distinctive qualities of tone colour.

#### EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY MUSIC—IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY GARMENTS

Charles Macklean. Sonata for flute and piano, freely arr. by Ernest Bullock. (Oxford University Press.) 4s. 6d.

Domenico Scarlatti. Sonatas for violin and clavier, arr. and ed. by Lionel Salter. (No. 8 in G.) (Augener, Ltd.) 3s.

Mozart. "The Caged Nightingale". Soprano Aria from *Zaide*, arr. by E. Bullock, Engl. words by Percy Gordon. (Oxford University Press.) 3s. 6d.

Ever since those far off-days when Stravinsky and Alfredo Casella startled their contemporaries with their ingenious bowdlerizations of Pergolesi and Domenico Scarlatti, the habit of editing eighteenth-century music of varying importance, by more or less indiscriminate methods, remains with us as one of the most persistent musical fads of this epoch. Despite steady discouragement from serious scholars, the activities of these incompetent, if well-meaning editors continue, aided and abetted by publishers who should know better.

Ernest Bullock's "free arrangement" of Charles Macklean's Sonata for flute and piano (first published in 1737) is a case in point. In a comprehensive preface (whose bibliographical part is all the more welcome, as very little seems to be known about this obscure Scottish composer) the editor admits that he has made no attempt to reproduce the style of the eighteenth century in his piano accompaniment. After this frank disclosure of his incompetence for this particular task one is left wondering where his editorial duties come in at all. Macklean's composition is certainly not fairly presented by this new version. Originally conceived as a so-called trio-sonata, scored for violin, violoncello and harpsichord (the latter to be performed from a figured bass), which could also be adjusted for German flute and harpsichord (as is so often the case in the chamber music of his London contemporary, K. F. Abel) it appears here as Duo for flute and piano. In the latter part the editor has wisely omitted any trace of the original "basso continuo" figures. Indeed, he would hardly be able to justify from them dissonant clashes as in bar 5. To reprint the flute melody (in the short Adagio bridge on page 8) without any suggestion

for embellishments seems hardly fair to the modern player who knows from similar cases (Handel's sonatas for flute (oboe) and B.C.) how necessary cadential embellishments are in movements existing only on bare contours and obviously designed to be treated as "res simplex" of a set of variations. All the more surprising after this exercise in musical Spartanism is the appearance of a "glissando" effect in the concluding Allegretto grazioso. Surely this most unusual technical device (not mentioned in any treatise of orchestration from Berlioz to Forsyth) would have deserved an explanatory footnote. Incidentally, Macklean's composition is of slight value only, and compares unfavourably with many a work by Hotteterre, Quantz and K. F. Abel, who obviously knew better how to humour the current craze for flute, so characteristic of their century.

If the case of eighteenth-century music seems badly served by editions of this kind, the re-issue of one of Domenico Scarlatti's eight sonatas for violin and figured bass is a most welcome addition to our knowledge of this great precursor of classical piano style. The fact that these eight sonatas (of which Nos. 4, 7, and 8 have so far been reprinted) are the only ones, out of the bulk of 500 odd, with a figured bass, as well as their gentle melodic beauty, amply justify the editor's choice. The disposition of the original (copied from the Bibl. Marciana, Venice) seems to indicate that the composer again had the conventional type of trio-sonata in mind. An additional remark in the editor's interesting commentary, recommending the use of a violoncello (for doubling the clavier's bass part) would therefore have been welcome. Lionel Salter's arrangement for clavier has been turned out with taste and discernment and should sound well on a harpsichord. It seems a pity that the editor has marred his clavier part by the (avoidable) intrusion of consecutive fifths (page 2, bars 16/17 and later bars 22/27).

A separate edition of the soprano aria "Trostlos schluchzet Philomelë" from Mozart's operatic fragment *Zaide* (1780) is a timely reminder of the undeniable fact that a treasure trove of beautiful music still waits to be disinterred from the dusty grave of his "Operatic Fragments". The graceful piece, transgressing nowhere the upper boundary of



can be easily negotiated by any light soprano of Mozartian qualifications and should enable singers to give the all too hackneyed coloratura arias of his better known operas a much needed rest.

#### NEW MUSIC FOR SOLO INSTRUMENTS

- Ralph Greaves. *A Christmas Overture* for Organ. (Oxford University Press.) 3s. 6d.  
 Wilfred J. Emery. *A Christmas Prelude* for Organ. (Oxford University Press.) 1s. 6d.  
 Bernard Stevens. *Sonata for Violin and Piano* (violin part edited by Max Rostal). (Oxford University Press.) 7s. 6d.

There may or may not be a certain seasonal demand for this kind of shoddy *Gebräuchsmusik* among organists. If so, it is to be hoped that performers will confine themselves entirely to the medium of the Wurlitzer and to the intervals of cinema programmes during Christmas week. This music is certainly out of place in the organ loft. Max Reger and César Franck have proved that it is possible to write in a popular and even emotional vein for the "Queen of instruments", dispensing with types of stricter counterpoint and indulging even in some chromatic interplay, without debasing their artistic standard. The kind of cheap and bombastic harmonization practised by Messrs. Greaves and Emery can only corrupt the taste of the young and nauseate the old. It is exactly this kind of Pseudo-Romanticism which discredits increasingly the wonderful artistic heritage handed down to posterity by the Romantic Movement of the nineteenth century. These new Bogus Romantics are their great ancestors' deadliest enemies. Of the two items under

discussion Wilfred Emery's *Christmas Prelude* shows signs of better workmanship and at least a tendency to develop a certain thematic subject organistically. Its more respectable dullness stands out in sharp contrast to the bumptious modulatory ebullitions of Mr. Greaves, whose *Christmas Overture* is a flimsy edifice of well-known "potpourri" features, falling back on an initial 6/8 tune and revelling in delectable suggestions for Registration. A few spices from Frederick Delius' cruet stand now and then can hardly atone for the many Post-Puccinianisms, committed earlier in this Overture.

In Bernard Stevens' Duo for Violin and Piano the title "Sonata" is completely misleading in its pretentiousness and should not be applied to a slender composition in one movement, distinguished by two theme groups only. "Rhapsody" would have been a much more appropriate sub-title. While facilitating the listener's approach to the structural vagaries of the work, it would better justify the improvisational character of the melodic material. Both instruments are for the greater part canonically intertwined, but when the violin begins to rhapsodize, the piano supplies shifting background harmonies to its partner's rather circular effusions. There is no real attempt at a development section, only slight traces of variation technique. Neither harmony nor partwriting discloses any particular originality of thought. Yet I am almost certain that the composer is not without talent. He should try to emulate the shining example of Brahms, who destroyed approximately 20 string quartets before he published his first in 1873 at the mature age of 40. It is surprising that a discriminating artist like Max Rostal should have taken the trouble to edit the violin part of so immature and inconclusive a composition. It is a gratifying compensation, however, for the composer's shortcomings, that he should have edited it so scrupulously and efficiently.

H. F. R.

## Gramophone Records

### J. S. Bach: *St. Matthew Passion*.\*†

Elsie Suddaby (soprano); Kathleen Ferrier (contralto); Eric Greene, tenor (Evangelist); Henry Cummings, bass (Jesus); B. Boyce, bass; G. Clinton, bass (Judas, Peter, Pilate, the High Priest); William Parsons (bass); Dr. O. Peasgood (organ); Dr. T. Lofthouse (continuo), with the Bach Choir and the Jacques Orchestra, c. Dr. Reginald Jacques.

Decca AK 2001-2021. 99s. 9d.

The supreme merit of this performance is its fidelity to the spirit of Bach. Such an achievement becomes possible only in a treatment which proceeds from the essence of the music itself, and it is one naturally to be expected under a musician of such fine perception and accomplishment as Dr. Reginald Jacques. The degree of understanding shown by a conductor in handling the opening chorus of the *Passion* is a reliable, if not infallible guide to the likelihood of his success in handling the work as a whole. The beautifully supple rhythm and sense of musical flow established in "Come, ye daughters" are qualities that can be traced throughout the performance, and which belong to the core of its vitality. Their fulfilment is but one of many factors impelling recognition that we have here a great conductor of Bach—if by "great" is meant a conductor with an inspired faculty for perceiving and conveying the ultimate truth expressed by the composer.

Since it is clear that much trouble has been taken to produce a worthy recording, one cannot but regret the more keenly that one problem, at least, seems as far as ever from

\* Strongly recommended.

† Cf. Vol. IX, p. 317 [Ed.].

solution. Despite the most careful testing and re-testing of these records for purposes of review, it must be confessed that the words sung by the chorus are for the most part elusive. The listener with a score in front of him, or with an intimate knowledge of the *Passion*, is able largely to counter this disadvantage. But the disadvantage for others remains, and for them the gravity of the impediment needs no stress. It has always been a matter of notorious difficulty to secure verbal clarity where a chorus has to deal with extended syllables or rapid singing, but here the lack of clarity is to be found even in some of the chorales where one would expect any difficulty to admit of resolution. It is impossible for anyone unacquainted with the circumstances of the recording (so excellent in other respects) to judge fairly whether, in fact, more could have been done to deal with the problem, but from the listener's standpoint there is no doubt about the limitation that its presence imposes.

The orchestral playing at its best (Nos. 26, 35, 48 and 78) is exceedingly beautiful, and nowhere less than good and reliable. A few instances can be found (Nos. 1 and 33 among them) where greater felicity of tone is desirable, notably in the wood-wind, and there are occasional passages where the accompaniment to the arias, though wholly trustworthy, strikes the ear as more ordinary than the music demands. In general, however, the relationship between singers and orchestra is expertly judged, and the playing as a whole is incomparably better than that of the Leipzig recording. A special word of admiration is due to Dr. Thornton Lofthouse (continuo) whose contribution is masterly, and to Dr. Peasgood (organ) whose skill and discernment are unerring.

The chorus bring to their task an exceptional sympathy and insight in partnership with excellent singing whose richness of tonal quality is enviable. One could hardly wish for anything better than the quiet, expressive treatment of Nos. 25 and 72, and the vigour of attack in No. 76 is superb. The result is nearly always admirable, too, as regards the many other pages whose shades are included within this broad range of expression. An unusual disappointment occurs in "To what purpose is this waste?" (No. 7), for the preceding recitative invites the chorus to a show of indignation, and this emotion is barely discernible in their response. The moments of heightened drama are, for the most part, seized without being overstressed, but it is surprising to find that the legitimate point of "Have lightnings and thunders?" becomes curiously blunted. On the other hand, the chorales are consistently well sung, and their model treatment is unlikely to be supplanted.

The interpretative problems confronting the soloists are sometimes discussed as though the dilemma lies between a chilling impersonality and a characterization so personal as to become objectionable. The soloists in this performance have the great merit of perceiving, though in varying degrees, that any true interpretation must arise from the terms of the music itself, and that fidelity to Bach ensures justice to sentiment without risk of sentimentality. Elsie Suddaby and Kathleen Ferrier both give us beautiful singing with refreshing purity of style. If one would have welcomed the more consistent sense of compassion which the music demands, it is partly because these singers are so admirable in certain numbers where tragic yet disciplined emotion is fully realised—Miss Suddaby in "Bleed and break, thou loving heart" (No. 12) and Miss Ferrier in "O Gracious God" (No. 60). The extensive and exacting role of the Evangelist is one which finds Eric Greene prepared at every point. The performance as a whole owes a great deal to the vitality of his narration, and to the wonderful artistry with which he judges so exactly the finest shades of sentiment and phrasing. Nothing could be more musicianly than the dignity of Henry Cummings' treatment of the part of Jesus, and nothing could be more commendable than that his fine singing proceeds from Bach with a completeness eschewing all trace of incongruity. A comparable degree of care gives distinction to the accessory roles whose handling can exert a decisive effect upon the total pattern of the work. The singing of William Parsons in "At evening, hour of calm and rest" (No. 74) and "Make thee clean, my heart, from sin" (No. 75) is memorable in a performance which provides so much to be remembered with gratitude and respect.

R. H.



- Haydn: Symphony No. 88 in G.*  
National Symphony Orchestra, c. Jorda.  
Decca AK 1472-4. 14s. 3d.
- Mozart: Symphony in D, K. 504 ("Prague").*  
L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, c. Ansermet.  
Decca K 1812-4. 14s. 3d.
- Bach: Brandenburg Concerto No. 6 in B flat.*  
Boyd Neel String Orchestra, c. Boyd Neel.  
Decca AK 1580-1. 9s. 6d.
- Beethoven: Coriolan Overture, Op. 62.\**  
London Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Schuricht.  
Decca K 2079. 4s. 9d.
- Dvořák: Carnival Overture, Op. 92.\**  
London Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Kleiber.  
Decca K 1989. 4s. 9d.
- Prokofiev: Symphony No. 5 in B Flat, Op. 100.\**  
Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra of New York, c. Rodzinski.  
Columbia LX 1147-51. 30s.
- Ravel: Bolero.\**  
Orchestre National de la Radiodiffusion Française, c. Kletzki.  
Columbia LX 1133-4. 12s.

The Haydn recording suffers from an echo which, in the slowly accentuated *tutti*s of the introduction, amounts to reverberation. The performance is excellent. Ansermet's *Prague* is a little disappointing. There are many good moments, but occasionally a lack of tonal balance between choirs is apparent, notably at the beginning of the *Allegro*. However, dynamics and feeling so clearly derive from first-class conducting and alert execution that the issue deserves a careful hearing.

Recent hearings of Boyd Neel and his orchestra playing Bach concerti in the concert hall have only deepened for us the mystery why the extreme beauty of his orchestra's execution is entirely lost in this present series of Decca recordings.

The two overtures listed are each well realized in all departments, and show the London Philharmonic Orchestra at their recent best. Kleiber's *Carnaval* deserves to become the authoritative recording of a work which must be played well or remain tiresome.

Prokofiev's fifth Symphony is an exciting and very beautiful work. Stylistically characteristic in its spirited tunes and pungent harmonies, it is something new, from this composer, in its bigness—in its emotional range. The Prokofiev brand of wit is there (the Scherzo tune is of a tickling, memorable piquancy) but, this time, wit is part of a design. There is throughout the work an emotional depth and roundness, with nothing that is lachrymose or sentimental, and the over-all feeling is of pugnacious optimism of the kind art and life lack sadly in these days. We do not know whether this work has come under the recent whipcrack of Soviet criticism. But we will agree that the Russian "people" may not accept it as their music any more than the moronic mass of, say, London Promenaders or Hottentot tribal dancers will. The peoples of this world are forgetting how to recognize the vital spiritual message implicit in hope and pugnacity. It is as though only an Armada, a Russian October or a Dunkirk can do for them what, if we would but listen, the artist would do for all of us—as Prokofiev does here.

In recording the fifth Symphony, Columbia have managed to eliminate many of the faults we expect from American issues and the performance is superb. So is that of Kletzki and the French orchestra in *Bolero*. Both the Boston-Koussevitzky and the Lamoureux-composer issues must give way to this set which fully repays the care taken in its recording.

\* Strongly recommended.



*Haydn: Trumpet Concerto in E flat, and  
Purcell: A Trumpet Voluntary.*

Harry Mortimer and the Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Weldon.  
Columbia DX 1535-6. 8s.

*Szymanowski: Violin Concerto No. 1, Op. 35.*

Eugenia Uminska and the Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Fitelberg.  
Parlophone R 20563-5. 18s.

The trumpet Concerto is a first-class recording job and is excellently played. The tone of Mortimer's trumpet is not without rough edges, but the essential gaiety of the work is well realized in effects depending greatly on his playing *élan*. Perhaps Columbia have discovered, by research, that, after all, Jeremiah Clarke did *not* write "Purcell's Trumpet Voluntary". And perhaps, after all, this is just another example of sloppy labelling.

Whilst modern works of the first order are kept waiting for wax, Szymanowski's Concerto, here brilliantly recorded and performed, should have taken its place in the queue. Well back.

*Beethoven: Quartet No. 16 in F, Op. 135, and*

*Bach: Chorale in G.*

Lowenguth Quartet.

H.M.V. C 3712-5. 16s.

To dismiss the odd side first it must be said that this Bach arrangement for string Quartet (by Klemm and Weymar) is inept.

A new recording of Op. 135 was much needed. Its heavenly slow movement is one of Beethoven's finest and the last movement fits the place in history inevitably provided by the circumstances of its composition. It is the finale of his last completed work. A dialogue between the composer and his cook is believed to have inspired it ("Muss es sein? Es muss sein!"), and the whole simply constructed movement is Beethoven at his most powerful, drawing philosophy from the joining of life as he saw it and the supreme genius which possessed him in those last days.

Technically, the Lowenguth four play to an adequate standard; but the tone is somewhat dry and wiry so that their performance, though apt in dynamics, has a distant, disembodied feeling in the quieter passages.

*Beethoven: Sonata in F major, Op. 24.*

Max Rostal and Franz Osborn.

Decca AK 1817-9. 14s. 3d.

*Brahms: Sonata in A major, Op. 100.*

Kulenkampf and Solti.

Decca AK 2083-5. 14s. 3d.

In the case of each of these sonatas the performances are entirely satisfying and modern recording technique should mean that they are to be preferred to older issues of which there are several. That is certainly true of the Brahms Op. 100; but prospective buyers should listen through the Rostal-Osborn *Spring* Sonata before deciding to replace any one of the well-known previous recordings. Its tonal qualities may or may not find favour, although technically the performance is first-class.

Incidentally, all students of Brahms should possess a good recording of Op. 100. It shares with the F major Quintet Op. 88 the onus for Brahms' only formalized contribution to sonata structure, the single-movement *andante-scherzo*. This compression of broad lyrical and dynamic features produces a three movement sonata where balance is entirely satisfactory when cast in chamber music proportions.

Debussy: *Reflets dans l'Eau*,\* and

Galuppi: *Presto*.

Michelangeli.

H.M.V. DB 6859. 6s.

Schumann: *Romance No. 2 in F sharp*, and

Chopin: *Prelude in D flat*, Op. 28, No. 15.

Peschko.

Decca K 2089. 4s. 9d.

Widor: *Fifth Symphony*; *Toccata in F*, and

Purcell: *Trumpet Tune in D*.

Jeanne Demessieux.

Decca K 1914. 4s. 9d.

Moór: *Prelude Op. 123*, and

Falla: *Ritual Fire Dance*.

Zara Nelsova, acc. Parry.

Decca K 2088. 4s. 9d.

The Michelangeli record is exquisite. "Brave Galuppi! That was music". And we recommend his *Presto* as heartease for frustrated Browning lovers who have never been able to trace the *Toccata* of that celebrated ode. There is, on records, precious little else of Galuppi, more's the pity. This captivating thing and the first of Debussy's *Images* are played each with the special skill that style and period call for and each with exactly the right feeling. Peschko's record is only less good because less interesting in content and because the Chopin recording deteriorates in tone as the needle approaches disc centre. His playing is superb; the aching monotone reiteration of the "Raindrop" Prelude may, and does, often appear as an exercise in technique and tonality. Or it may, as on this record, recreate a moment of piteous, dramatic despair achieved nowhere else in music.

Widor's bit of organists' evergreen and Purcell's splendidly cheerful tune are brilliantly played and the recording can be safely recommended to organ lovers.

Little or nothing has been heard of Emmanuel Moór since Ysaÿe toured this country some 40 years ago with one of his concertos; this piece was very well worth recording. Nelsova's other choice is an insult to the composer, does no credit to Decca and brands the performers as perpetrators.

Kalman: *Suite*.

The Tonhalle Orchestra, Zürich, c. Reinshagen.

Decca AK 1862-3. 9s. 6d.

It is not the excellence of the Tonhalle Orchestra nor the beauty of Decca's recording alone which prompts a notice of this musical-play medley. We consider it worth saying that Kern, Rodgers, Coward and Romberg could none of them provide a string of tunes anywhere near as good as these. Neither, which is more important, could Lehar nor Oscar Strauss, and we recommend West End producers to think of Kalman when the next operetta revival sets in.

Ireland: *These things shall be*.

Hallé Orchestra, Hallé Choir, c. Barbirolli.

H.M.V. C 3826-7. 8s.

Lovers of the English choral tradition, which means the representative mass of musically inclined Britishers, will wish to own these records. The performance is outstanding and the recording clear. Parry Jones sings the tenor solo.

\* Strongly recommended.

*Bush: Dialectic, Op. 15.*

The Aeolian String Quartet.

Decca K 1852-3. 9s. 6d.

One meaning of "dialectic" is "logical dexterity" and another, "the art of arguing". Bach knew all about this, but he hadn't the word for it. Mr. Bush has written a polished and attractive work, the technical backbone of which is its purely fugal content. It is much more than merely dexterous and, because the composer is an artist and not a philosopher, there is more art than argument. That is as it should be; it was so with Bach. Produced under the auspices of the British Council, the recording matches the performance, which is excellent.

*Mozart: Concerto in A for piano and orchestra, K.488.*

Clifford Curzon and the National Symphony Orchestra, c. Neel.

Decca AK 1394-6. 14s. 3d.

*Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 4 in F minor, Op. 36.\**

The Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Dobrowen.

His Master's Voice C 3809-13. 20s.

*Kodaly: Háry Janos;—Suite.*

The Philadelphia Orchestra, c. Ormandy.

Columbia LX 1130-2. 18s.

*Schubert: "Rosamunde"—Entracte in B flat, Op. 26, and*

*Marche Militaire in D, Op. 51, No. 1.*

The Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Sargent.

Columbia DX 1520. 4s.

It is a pity that the Mozart issue cannot be unreservedly recommended. Curzon gives a lovely reading but the curious Decca piano tone ruins the effect of his performance. There is no edge to it; the effortless, rippling passages never sparkle and all sustained notes may as well have been played on a xylophone. Yet the orchestra comes through well enough. Because of all this we recommend the Denis Matthews-Liverpool P.O. performance (Columbia DX 1167-9) as a better set of records, but not a better performance.

Apart from the many older, and in some cases technically obsolescent, recordings of Tchaikovsky's fourth Symphony, the work was very well served by the Hallé Orchestra under Lambert on Columbia DX 1096-1100. The present recording replaces that effort—purely as a recording. Philharmonia's brass and wood reproduce the wind scoring in all its ripeness. The master's self-pity is made to drip from these records like tears. Both Lambert and Dobrowen do this sort of thing excellently of course, but the recording of this latest issue is far in advance of the other in fidelity and is as good as anything we have lately heard.

With the Kodaly set we have a joyously felicitous performance ruined by the manner of its recording. We wonder again if American gramophiles actually like the stridency achieved in most of their orchestral fare. If they do not, they suffer hugely.

When he is not conducting *Messiah*, Sir Malcolm Sargent is at his best with early romantic tit-bits, and the Liverpool Orchestra rarely play but at their happiest with him. He serves up these Schubert *meringues* with the easeful air of the head waiter who knows he has both pleased the customer and improved on the chef.

*Chopin: Sonata No. 2 in B flat minor, Op. 35.*

Malcuzyński.

Columbia LX 1119-21. 18s.

*Beethoven: Sonata No. 5 in D, Op. 102, No. 2.*

Piatigorsky and Berkowitz.

Columbia LX 1136-7. 12s.

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\* Strongly recommended.

Beethoven: *Sonata in E, Op. 109,\** and  
Purcell: *Suite in G minor.*

Denis Matthews.

Columbia DX 1509-11. 12s.

The "Funeral March" Sonata is just on the nether edge of reality as here presented, both with regard to the sounds a piano should make and to the effects Chopin intended. Having listened uncertainly to three movements well enough executed, not until the *presto* do we realize that the tone has been *over-sonorous*. There, in Malcuzyński's too hasty flurry of notes, all detail disappears as each particle of sound is absorbed in the echo of its predecessor. No ordinary piano, unaided by over-amplification at the source, should have produced this effect.

New recordings of both the C major and D major cello and piano sonatas of Op. 102 should be welcome. This half of our hopes in that direction will not do. The performance is spoilt by indifferent recording in which piano and cello tone achieve no true balance. The performers are not to blame. In the last movement of this fine work is compressed all Beethoven's uncanny skill in handling the obvious. A simple scale passage is practically all there is of subject matter, and it is transformed into one of his greatest essays in good-humour. The performance of these passages is outstanding and, again, the pity is that so ill a report must be given of the set as a whole.

Denis Matthews gives a fine rendering of Op. 109. This is true musicianship; he grasps every point and brings out all the undertones. The final of the third movement variations has ever defeated all but the very greatest amongst pianists. Matthews plays it faultlessly. The little Purcell Suite is also delightfully done.

Verdi: *Don Carlos*—"O Carlo ascolta," and  
Giordano: *Andrea Chenier*—"Nemico della Patria."

Silveri, acc. Royal Opera House Orchestra, c. Rankl.

Columbia DX 1521. 4s.

Grieg: *Ich liebe Dich*, and

Brahms: *Wiegenlied*, Op. 49, No. 4.

Anton Dermota, acc. Ivor Newton.

Decca M 620. 3s. 3d.

The operatic arias are sung in the best Silveri manner and are well accompanied. This record serves to remind us that if *Chenier* is a much over-rated piece, *Don Carlos* suffers only because we do not know enough of it.

The songs, on the other hand, are the most over-done of chestnuts and are not well turned out in this latest serving. Dermota is the kind of tenor whose low notes do not record well; one feels someone else is singing them. This may not be his fault for he puts his phrases together most sensitively; and he is well accompanied. J. B.

Bartók: *Concerto for Orchestra.\**

Concertgebouw Orchestra, Amsterdam, c. van Beinum.

Decca AK 2042-46. 23s. 9d.

This is an authentic performance of Bartók's most immediately accessible masterpiece. The recording is for the most part very satisfactory, though there is some audible distortion, in particular of the trumpets; and the dynamics, as recorded, are not always precisely what the score indicates. For example, comparison between score and records will prove that the opening of the work is recorded at too low a level. But despite these minor imperfections, this set will give greater satisfaction than most performances we are likely to hear from native orchestras and represents a praiseworthy step off the beaten track on the part of the manufacturers.

\* Strongly recommended.

*Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 5 in E flat, Op. 73.*

Artur Schnabel and the Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Galliera.

His Master's Voice DB 6692-96. 30s.

Schnabel's performance has long been known and respected for its authority and these records are most successful in catching its imperious ring. The technical quality of the recording leaves a good deal to be desired, in particular where loud passages occur towards the centre of the disc.

*Beethoven: Symphony No. 3 in E flat, Op. 55.\**

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Furtwängler.

His Master's Voice DB 6741-46; DBS 6747. 39s.

This is very much what one would expect: a typical Furtwängler performance with what our English critics, in their omniscience, describe as his "usual exaggerations". There is also the usual Vienna echo on the records, though it is not as objectionable as was the case with some pre-war issues. Nevertheless, this seems the best recorded performance available, being more closely and consistently integrated than Victor de Sabata's version on Decca.

*Mozart: Masonic Funeral Music, K.477.\**

Columbia LX 1155. 6s.

*Schubert: Symphony No. 9 in C major.*

Columbia LX 1138-43. 36s.

Both played by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Karajan.

The Mozart is superb from all points of view. Karajan obtains a performance of dignity and power which retains something approaching its full effect through this recording. A really outstanding achievement.

The Schubert is less successful. The interpretation and the orchestral playing obviously have that distinction which has become the hall-mark of the Karajan-Vienna Philharmonic partnership, but the recording itself is nothing like good enough. The overall effect is woolly and ill-defined, almost as if a thick blanket had been hung between orchestra and microphones.

*Handel: Organ Concerto No. 9 in B flat (arr. Henry Wood), and**Arne: Allegro moderato from Concerto No. 6 (arr. Thalben-Ball).*

George Thalben-Ball and the Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Süsskind.

His Master's Voice C 3814-16. 12s.

This is a Handelian *pastiche* almost worthy of Bétové. The playing is lively and the recording good.

*Mozart: Piano Concerto in C minor, K.491.*

Kathleen Long and the Concertgebouw Orchestra, c. van Beinum.

Decca AK 2075-78. 19s.

*Piano Concerto in C major, K.503.\**

Edwin Fischer and the Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Krips.

His Master's Voice DB 6604-07. 24s.

Here are new recordings of Mozart's two most dramatic piano concertos, perhaps even his greatest.

Of the Dutch performance a charitable critic might say that the players have concentrated on the elegiac nature of the music, while another, less favourably disposed, would label it dull. This would not be a fair judgment, as the technical skill of the Concertgebouw orchestra can always be admired, but a little more venom in the first movement would have lifted what is merely a good set of records into the first class.

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\* Strongly recommended.

K.503 is played and recorded in the grand style, almost a barnstorming effort, but Fischer's playing is not always as clearly articulated as it should be and there is an occasional lack of unanimity between piano and orchestra which ought to have been put right while the records were being made. But these are not serious faults and the eerie tension of the music is wonderfully well conveyed to the listener.

*Tchaikovsky: Casse-Noisette Suite, Op. 71a.*

Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Malko.

His Master's Voice C 3835-37. 12s.

This is a straightforward performance without frills or finesse; indeed one might describe it as rather rough. Those responsible for recording this orchestra seem to have reverted to their old evil practice of "over-recording" a smallish body of players in the hope that it will sound like a large one. It doesn't. The result sounds most unnatural and will deceive none but the most obtuse variety of musical rabbit. The first side of the set submitted for review is handicapped by a most objectionable fluttering surface-noise, but elsewhere background noise is creditably low. Readers already possessing the New York (Rodzinski) set are not advised to part with it (Columbia DX 1342-4).

*Mendelssohn: Piano Concerto No. 1 in G minor, Op. 25.*

Moura Lympany and the Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Kubelik.

His Master's Voice C 3838-39. 8s.

A good lively performance spoilt by the same kind of overblown, fruity recording we have complained of in the *Casse-Noisette Suite*.

*Rossini: Overture, William Tell.*

National Symphony Orchestra, c. Olof.

Decca K 1310-11. 9s. 6d.

Not one of the best examples of Decca's *ffrr* technique, this is, even so, the most rewarding recorded version of this overture we have heard. The performance is adequate without scaling any heights and the recording likewise.

*Ravel: La Valse.\**

L'Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire de Paris, c. Ansermet.

Decca AK 1867-68. 9s. 6d.

An outstanding achievement from all points of view and strongly recommended to all those who have yet to learn what can be done by means of gramophone reproduction.

G. N. S.

*Rossini: Overture, La Cimbale di Matrimonio.*

Symphony Orchestra of the Augusteo, Rome, c. Vincenzo Bellezza.

Columbia DX 1522. 4s.

This is an inferior Rossini piece played with very little conviction. It follows the accepted formula, slow introduction and lively allegro. The most interesting thing is the resemblance the theme of the allegro bears to the concluding section of Schubert's *Shepherd on the Rock*. The recording is shallow, and at times rather strident.

*Mascagni: Intermezzo—Cavalleria Rusticana.*

*Leoncavallo: Intermezzo—I Pagliacci.*

The Royal Opera House Orchestra, Covent Garden, c. Franco Patané.

Columbia DX 1519. 4s.

There is little to choose between the two sides; if anything *Rusticana* is dosed more heavily with the *bacillus vulgaris*. The recording is competent and the performance extracts full measure of glycerine and glucose from the respective scores.

\* Strongly recommended.



*Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 6 in B minor, Op. 74 (Pathétique).*

L'Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire, c. Charles Münch.

Decca AK 1968-73. 28s. 6d.

*Mendelssohn: Symphony No. 4 in A, Op. 90 (Italian) and*

*Vivaldi (arr. Mortari): Andante (from Olimpiade).*

Turin Symphony Orchestra, c. Mario Rossi.

Decca AK 1974-77. 19s.

Hearing these two works in close succession makes me regret that Mendelssohn has gone out and Tchaikovsky come in. There can be little doubt that Mendelssohn was a man and musician of taste and sensibility, whereas Tchaikovsky seemed incapable of any refinement. After all there is some intellectual content in the *Italian*, but in the *Pathétique* technique and content are inextricably mixed—no small achievement—but the lurid results do not justify the means. Neither Mendelssohn nor Tchaikovsky were true symphonic writers. Mendelssohn made a valiant effort in the first movement of the *Italian*, but the development just does not develop: the movement stands stock-still while we have bar after bar of *quasi-fugato* rhythmic repetition. Tchaikovsky substitutes drama for development, but personal drama, hardly ever musical. Admittedly he does not stand still: he stamps. Nevertheless his progress is nil. Twenty bars from the *Jupiter* make one despair of both composers. The Tchaikovsky is finely played with a certain amount of acidity and a refreshing crispness, though the engineers might have provided a more full-blooded and sonorous recording. Reproduction is accurate and there is little distortion. I find little fault with M. Münch's reading of the score, although in the *allegro con grazia* he forgets the *grazia*, and there is a startling confusion at the beginning of the movement where a beat, which is mysteriously dropped, gives the waltz a rather shaky send-off. The *adagio lamentoso* runs its course and collapses effectively at the appointed time. Here, though, I think the older Furtwängler set has something this new version lacks. Furtwängler was able to conjure some element of struggle, something near a resigned dignity, from the music. With Münch not so: all subsides and slumps into a kind of fluid misery. It is a pity that the very luscious string-tone occasionally obscures the pessimistic wood-wind figures, particularly on the last side.

It is hard to realize why this new Mendelssohn issue was considered necessary. The recording is inferior (by present Decca standards) and the performance has neither the leisure nor the stylish grace of the Heinz Unger set. There is a bad reverberating break at the end of side one, and the timpani appear to have been allotted a microphone of their own. The whole symphony is over-played, and the lightness of the orchestral texture completely lost. Conductors should try playing this Symphony more in the tradition of Haydn and Mozart than of middle-period Beethoven. The wood-wind are curiously ragged throughout and too frequently play flat, almost imperceptibly, but flat nevertheless.

The Vivaldi fill-up is grotesque. This lovely andante is ruined by the vast string forces employed in its performance.

*Saint-Saëns: Concerto No. 1 in A minor, Op. 33.*

Pierre Fournier (cello) and the Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Walter Süsskind.

His Master's Voice DB 6602-3. 12s.

This music begins to irritate even after three inches of the first movement. Whilst the opening *Allegro* has a sober respectability about it, the *Allegretto* is insufferably trite with its arch reminiscences of the eighteenth century. The work is continuous, the beginning of the finale echoing the themes of the first movement. The whole concerto is a perfect example of bad taste, stylishly presented. Strip off the slick mask of this music and I feel that little would be found but—to quote E. M. Forster—"panic and emptiness". I doubt though if Saint-Saëns was capable of panic: emptiness remains.

*Ravel: Ondine.\**

Monique Haas.

Decca K 1888. 4s. 9d.

An almost perfect recording and an impeccable performance. It is astonishing that Ravel managed to write a truly virtuoso piece without destroying his own highly-personal keyboard style. I trust that Decca will issue the other two pieces to complete the set, recorded by Mlle. Haas.

*Bax: The Garden of Fand.\**

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Sir Thomas Beecham.

His Master's Voice DB 6654-5. 12s.

(Recorded under the auspices of the British Council.)

Like so many other works of Bax, *Fand* seems to be strongly influenced by Delius, but it is Delius without the romantic philosophy and conscious pessimism, and Bax possesses a rather keener pictorialism. His nostalgic use of folk-song is similar—witness side three of this recording, a protracted orchestral elaboration of a simple theme. Bax whilst indulging in acute chromaticism is able to put it to little architectural use (as Reger does for instance). The work is extremely well played and satisfactorily recorded.

*Beethoven: Sonata in G major, Op. 96, and**Rondo in G major, Op. 86.*

Max Rostal (violin) and Franz Osborn (piano).

Decca K 1950-53. 19s.

A pleasant performance of this lyrical Sonata. A nice balance is maintained between the two instruments. Perhaps a little more *legato* in the trio would have been an advantage.

D. M.

\* Strongly recommended.

## Correspondence

4, Norton Way N.,  
Letchworth, Herts.  
4th December, 1948.

### MOZART'S "DELIBERATE" SELF-QUOTATIONS

To the Editor of THE MUSIC REVIEW.

SIR,—I was very gratified to notice that the admittedly incautious remark in my article on Mozart's piano Concerto in C minor, K. 491 (MR, IX/2), referring to the "rare instances of self-quotation", has elicited such a spate of most valuable information from two Mozart experts, Hyatt King and Hans Keller, in the Correspondence section of your periodical (MR, IX/3 and 4). While agreeing with them in principle, that such self-quotations must have occurred more frequently in Mozart's case than I had previously imagined, I do think that we should limit ourselves strictly to the cases of "conscious" self-quotations (to use Mr. Hyatt King's own term).

Hans Keller's valuable discovery of the "inter-operatic Leitmodulations" and "Leitmotifs" in *Don Giovanni*, acting as a subcutaneous connecting link between the A major Terzetto and the "Serenade" (*viz.* MR, IX/4, pp. 297/98), is quite certainly one of those cases of deliberate self-quotations I had in mind, no less than the famous recurrence of the melody from "Un bacio di mano" as second subject in the first movement of the *Jupiter* Symphony, as pointed out by Mr. Hyatt King (MR, IX/3, p. 240). Unfortunately I am unable at the moment to compare the other self-quotations, as enumerated in his very welcome letter. But I do feel that two extremely characteristic self-quotations of Mozart, hitherto omitted in this friendly argument *à trois* should now be mentioned. They may contribute to a better distinction between "conscious" and "unconscious" self-quotations in Mozart's case.

(I) Symphony in C, K. 551 (*Jupiter*). The subject of the finale:



is anticipated in the trio of the preceding minuetto:



Surely a clear case, if ever there was one, of deliberate self-quotation, almost in the manner of a Leitmotif.

(II) The frequent quotation of Mozart's favourite "Rocket-Theme" (*cf.* Hugo Riemann), first used in K. 388 (Serenade for winds).



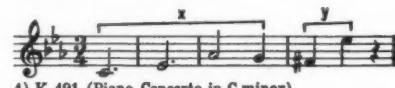
1) K. 388 and K. 406 (String Quintet No. 1)



2) K. 457 (Piano Sonata in C minor)



3) K. 394 (Piano Fantasia in C)



4) K. 491 (Piano Concerto in C minor)



5) K. 475 (Piano Fantasia in C minor)



6) K. 550 (Symphony in G minor Finale)

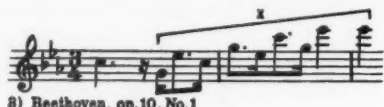
To these could be added the following deliberate derivative quotations of this thematic germ in Beethoven's and Schubert's work:



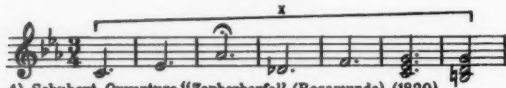
1) Beethoven, op. 2, No. 1



2) Beethoven, op. 1, No. 3



3) Beethoven, op. 10, No. 1



4) Schubert, Overture "Zauberharfe" (Rosamunde), (1820)

Yours faithfully,

H. F. REDLICH.

## AN OPEN LETTER TO WHOM IN THE B.B.C. IT MAY CONCERN

SIR,—A number of serious and recurring defects in musical broadcasts require your immediate attention. The recent broadcast of the München recording of Bruckner's First furnished a good selection:—

(1) *Presentation*. As in many other instances, the most important thing remained unsaid. The announcer informed us that "most of these [Bruckner] performances" would offer the *Urfassungen*, but omitted to say whether this was true of the present performance. It was.

(2) *Transmission*. Within the last five months, this was at least the third<sup>1</sup> broadcast of a recording where an extensive black-out occurred. In a live broadcast *vis major* may take the blame, but in the case of a recording (broadcast, moreover, on the timeless Third) there can be no excuse for not starting afresh, especially when, as in these three instances, most listeners are unacquainted with the work, and will not soon be able to hear it again. The Bruckner was faded in as late as bar 22. How is a novice to take in a symphonic movement if he is not allowed to hear the first subject?

With regard to (3) *Sound Reproduction*, variations of pitch, while nowise the only fault in this broadcast, are the most unbearable common defect of—without exaggeration—most B.B.C. broadcasts of either gramophone records, or B.B.C. recordings, or foreign recordings. In 1947 M. J. L. Pulling pointed out in this journal<sup>2</sup> that

"much greater care is now being taken in the mechanical design of recording and reproducing apparatus of the more serious type to ensure that the speed of rotation is not only accurate but ... free from sporadic or rhythmic fluctuations ... How all too often is the musical ear tortured by fluctuations in the pitch of what should be a steady note ...".

Since the B.B.C. is almost as cruel a torturer as the cinema, I can hardly believe that you have not received any protests. If, however, you have not, the matter is all the more alarming. In that case we would seem to be witnessing a slump in musical ears which you have helped to bring about, and which it is your business to counteract. At the same time, even an unmusical ear must notice, though it may not mind, such a lavish change (as distinct from fluctuations) of pitch as happened, for instance, at the beginning of the Bruckner adagio, where the horns' C's were far flatter than the concluding C's of the allegro.

Lastly, mechanical sound reproduction apart, I have repeatedly observed your indifference to the question of authenticity. Thus, while Einstein published his *First Authentic Edition* of "the" ten Mozart quartets years ago, people will go on playing things which Mozart never wrote, and the B.B.C. couldn't care less about Mahler's reminder: "Tradition ist Schlamperei". When, for example, shall we hear G instead of G flat as the 1st violin's last note in bar 14 of K. 589's finale? In my opinion one has to know that the G flat is wrong even if one does not know Einstein, whose endeavours seem to be regarded, anyway, as a pastime for musicologists and other idlers. Again, only recently David Martin and his colleagues, playing the D major Quintet K. 593, surprised me in the last movement with a conjunct and partly chromatic upward motion wherever I expected to hear an inversion of the theme. Being only of slight thematic significance, their version seems highly improbable. If it is nevertheless correct, we are back at the beginning of my letter. For in that case the Third Programme listener ought to have been told that, and why the usual version (*cf. e.g. Peters and Eulenburg*) is not authentic.

I have limited this letter to elementary (pre-musical) and objective criticism: will it receive the attention which a statement of facts deserves?

Yours sincerely,

HANS KELLER.

<sup>1</sup> For the other two, see my "Radio Opera from Germany", this journal, February, 1949, and p. 131-2 of the present issue.

<sup>2</sup> "Present Trends in Sound Recording and Reproduction", November, 1947.

